

ANNOUNCER:

Ladies and gentlemen, the CBC presents "FLANDERS' FIELDS", Chapter 2, "CANADA ANSWERS THE CALL."

Last week, in the first programme of a series, we presented Joseph Schull's evocation of Canada in the World of August 1914. . . .

Today, the men who served in the Canadian Corps take up the story and tell, from their own memory of those eventful days, how the forty-seven year old Dominion responded to the call and, almost overnight, mustered a citizens army 33,000 strong.

"FLANDERS' FIELDS", Chapter Two,
"CANADA ANSWERS THE CALL".

STEVENS, G.R.:
PPCLI

It's very difficult today to think in terms of the emotion generated by the events of that last week in July 1914. I was at that time in Western Canada and at the little stations along the line people were sitting all night so that the telegrapher could read off the wire what was happening. Move by move the tension mounted such as it certainly has never mounted in Canada on any other event and when, finally, in the House of Commons, Sir Edward Grey pledged the strength of the British Empire on the invasion of Belgium, I think everyone in the country breathed a sigh of relief. If ever a country wanted war it was Canada in that week.

NARRATOR:

It's hard to imagine, at this range of fifty years, a Canada that wanted war. But the opinion of Colonel G. R. Stevens, noted Canadian Historian, is supported by the memory of scores of men who answered the call in that distant August, in some cases before the call was sounded.

From the first day of the month when Germany had declared war on Russia the handwriting had been on the wall and he that ran had read. In the cities bulletins were posted hourly outside newspaper offices and across the nation, as far as landlines went, the staccato chatter of the railway telegraph went on night and day bringing news to the hinterland.

For three long days and nights the tension mounted.

From Ottawa the word went out that Sir Robert Borden, the Prime Minister, had hastily called a Cabinet Council on Saturday the 1st, which had sat for hours determining the lines of national policy.

The Governor General, touring westward, had turned back from Banff by special train for Rideau Hall.

The Militia Department began to prepare for general mobilization.

While the Prime Minister was, for the moment, debarred from public speech others were not. From political leaders of all parties, and from newspapers of every shade of opinion, came the one expression of

(CONT)

NARRATOR: (CONT)

sentiment. Party controversy ceased. Sir Wilfrid Laurier said, "I have often declared that if the Mother country is ever in danger, ever threatened, Canada will render assistance to the full extent of her power. In view of the critical nature of the situation I have cancelled all my meetings. Pending such great questions there should be a truce to party strife".

The Duke of Connaught crystalized the general feeling in a sentence:-

"Canada stands united from the Pacific to the Atlantic in her determination to uphold the honor and traditions of our Empire".

From every province - every section - of the country, promises of help and support poured into Ottawa.

All day, and through the night they waited, and the talk was of the German Empire, founded on blood and iron; of the violation of Luxembourg ... the rape of Belgium. The one great fear was lest Britain should shrink from her duty and preserve an ignoble peace.

Then, in the evening of August 4th, the long awaited bulletin was posted. Britain, and automatically Canada, was at war with Germany.

The Times of London, measuring the temper of the

(CONT)

NARRATOR: (CONT)

overseas Dominions on that day and hour, had this to say of the Canadian scene:

"The demonstrations in the streets, the general enthusiasm, and the spontaneous offers of service did not mean that the Canadian people regarded the situation lightly. Below the surface-current of enthusiasm there ran a quiet, sober, solemn determination. The nation had reckoned the cost, and was willing to pay it. The deeper note of the public temper was most markedly seen when, on Tuesday, the definite announcement was posted on the newspaper bulletin boards that Britain had declared war. A sudden silence fell on the crowds. Men and women stood gravely still. Then, after a pause they turned to go. The hour of shouting was over; the days of work and sacrifice had come".

Within three hours of the declaration of war, the Canadian Government summoned a meeting of Parliament and the Militia Department gave instructions for the enrolment of twenty thousand volunteers for service at the front. Before the instructions could be issued, a hundred thousand men had offered themselves.

These were the men who would, one day, be the Canadian Corps and become the finest fighting unit in the Allied Armies.

This is their story, from the beginning.

This is how they tell it.

JAMIESON, Frank:
15th Btn.

I'll always remember the first night war was declared. Never forget it. We was all down the armouries. We was there in the hundreds. The 48th Band come out, played Rule Britannia, and that was the spark that ignited the thing. Away we went in crowds down through the streets. There was a French flag come on the scene and Union Jacks. I know I got home very tired about 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning afterwards and then we was called on parade the following Friday, the 48th. And we couldn't get through for traffic and they were pulling the poles off the streetcars and the people was mobbing us. You'd have thought we was coming back from the war let alone going there.

TIMMIS, R.S.:
R.C.D.

Ottawa decided right at the beginning that no man would be taken unless he volunteered, and a few days after the 4th of August we were all lined up. The R.C.D.'s were in the Riding School of Stanley Barracks, and they said all those who volunteer to go overseas take a step forward. There were only two of the whole regiment didn't.

NARRATOR:

Even the permanent force, the old defence army, numbering less than three thousand strong, must volunteer for service overseas. But if Canada was to contribute in significant strength to the common cause, the Militia, the summer soldiers, must be asked to volunteer as well ... and they were.

LONGSTAFFE, C.E.:
15th Btn.

When the war broke out old Colonel Currie, he was a nice guy too, he said to us one night, this was on the parade he said, "Boys, I'd like the whole regiment to volunteer. So will the whole regiment step forward two paces." So the whole darn regiment stepped forward, so the whole regiment had volunteered for action.

ROSS, J. S.:
4th Div.
Arty.

On the day war was declared, the 4th of August, the Major phoned us and we met at the Military Institute. He said, "Are you going?" We said, "Yes." So he immediately sent a wire to Ottawa saying that the 9th Battery Officers volunteer and await instructions.

BOYD, G.T.:
8th Btn.

On August 4th, the 90th Winnipeg Rifles was mobilized under Colonel J.W. O'Grady. He says, "Now," he says, "war has been declared and I have offered the regiment for service. Who goes?" Naturally everyone says "We go." So that's what happened.

NICHOLSON, N.:
16th Btn.

I was a member of the Seaforth Highlanders and we were assembled in the old skating rink in Vancouver. It was soon filled with recruits, and the next day, my birthday, I was 22.

DAWSON, F.:
7th Btn.

I was 27. I was one of the original 88th Fusiliers which started in Victoria. And then we were called up suddenly and they asked us, those who wished to join up to go overseas step forward, and the whole battalion stepped forward.

McLAREN, Jack:
PPCLI

On University Avenue in Toronto stood the Armouries, which building was besieged by a milling mob, all there to enlist for overseas service.

LONGSTAFFE, C.E.:
15th Btn.

They had to have a guard on the main door there. They had a guard there with fixed bayonets to keep the fellows back, pouring in, too many.

OWENS, E.J.:
2nd Btn.

It seemed to be spontaneous. The call went out and before the call was finished there was thousands trying to enlist. They were coming from all over. We had one fellow in our mob came from down the Yukon Trail and paid his own way to get in. A lot of them just pitched everything over and went.

LAYTON, F.G.:
LSHG

We'd never heard there was a war on out in the country. I happened to ride into town on horseback that night - Gladstone, Manitoba, and some of the chaps out on the main street said to me, "Have you fellows come in to join?" There were two of us. We said, "Join what?" "The Army". So we did. We came in off the farm and we joined up.

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L.:
5th Btn.

I was in a moving picture show in Yorkton, Sask., on the 4th of August and it flashed up on the screen that Germany had declared war on England. So a young Welshman and I, as soon as the show was over, we went over t

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L.: (cont)

5th Btn.

the local unit of the 16th Light Horse and told them that the war was on and we wanted to enlist. The Major in charge, he hadn't heard about it, but he got a sheet of foolscap out and headed it up "Enlistments for the German War", so we put our names down. I was 21 years old, and we'd had a couple of drinks, I don't mind telling you. So we decided when we heard about this well they couldn't do that to us.

PRICE, C.B.:

14th Btn.

There was a real consciousness of Canada being very much a partner in the Empire family. And we in the Militia certainly felt we were part of an Empire force.

LEWIS, Victor:

4th Btn.

We couldn't see where anybody could knock the British Lion off the map at all.

FISHER, A.H.:

8th Btn.

This was right in the middle of Irish Home Rule, and there was an Irishman and a German, and this Irishman, he'd have choked every bloody Britisher in the world you know. And the German thoroughly agreed with him all the way through, you see, and everybody was drinking you know. There was a Union Jack up at the back of the bar and finally the German couldn't stand it any longer and he made a grab at this Union Jack and wiped his feet in it and the Irishman give him a poke in the jaw. He gave a poke in the jaw, and the German got up and said, "What the hell did you do that for?" He said, "Look," he said, "it's all right meself acriticizing but no outsiders."

JEFFREY, John:

13th Btn.

A very large percentage of the first Canadian Division were Britishers who had been a short time in the country and many who had served in the British Army and of course they instantly flocked back.

SEAMAN, E.:

3rd Btn.

I think first and foremost now I'm a good Canadian, although I still get called bloody old broncho. Yet I will admit that when our boat docked at Plymouth I literally got down on my knees and kissed the soil of England, no fooling. I don't know what prompted me but I did it.

MORRISEY, T.S.:

13th Btn.

You've got to remember that in 1914 Canada was a pretty small country and made up with an awful lot of immigrants.

JACOBS, A.G.:
LSHG

I had only come to the country in 1912. Like ninety percent of the population in Saskatoon at that time, we were English immigrants. 1914 came and for two mornings we lined up to get in to enlist and as far as my unit was concerned I was actually the first man in Saskatoon.

SEAMAN, E.:
3rd Btn.

It was 1907 I landed in Canada to learn farming. Came out with some English colonization scheme. Seventeen years of age, you see. And I landed up on a rock farm up in Muskoka, if you please. Of all places to learn scientific farming, with only thirty acres of arable land out of the hundred and sixty, but I had a very enjoyable time. And then shortly before the war I came to Toronto to see my two sisters, and out broke the war, and in went Seaman.

MARLOW, H. A.:
LSHG

I joined up about the 8th of August. We was living up in Fort Rouge and I was down town taking a day off and I saw where they wanted some recruits for the Fort Garry Horse, so I jumped on a streetcar. And when I told them that I was from the Old Country and that I'd served in the Warwicks they straightway took my height, and I was signed on.

MORRISEY, T.S.:
13th Btn.

I think that 75% of my company, in the 13th Battalion, were Scottish born. They were all flocking to the colours and it was easier to join in Montreal than to get a boat and go back to Scotland. And when we arrived in Salisbury Plains the next morning I woke up and I didn't have twenty men in the Company. All the Scotsmen had taken leave and gone back to Scotland to see their people. Then they came back two days later.

NARRATOR:

But not all, by any means, were British born. A lusty forty percent of that first Division were Canadian unt the third, fourth, fifth, generation.

STEVENS, G. R.:
PPCLI

Well in the summer of 1914 I was a professional baseball player. I was rather ignorant of European history. I doubted if I knew where Belgium was. But I went up and as quickly as possible got into the 19th Alberta Dragoons at Edmonton.

MacDONNELL, J.M.:
4 Div. Arty.

I don't think I joined up at all; I think I was just there. I'd been in the Militia for two years and I'm quite satisfied that if I hadn't joined up my Major would have proclaimed me at the corner of King and Yonge. Seriously speaking, I joined up, I think, on the 4th of August. It seemed not only the natural thing to do but the inevitable thing to do.

ARNOLD, F.C.:
7th Btn.

I tried to get in when the boys started out in Chilliwack, but I couldn't make it. There was too many men by this time, but I managed to get in by the 14th. I was twenty-one and nine months the day I enlisted. I had never seen soldiers on parade, only once in a church parade in Vancouver, in my life before. I was about the rawest recruit that ever come down the pike but I knew how to shoot.

CHRISTOPHER, H.R.:
Fort Garry Horse

In 1912 I joined the Fort Garry Horse Militia in Winnipeg. War broke out on the 4th of August. I put on my uniform, my best blues, and I went up to the barracks to join up to go to the war. Colonel Ross said to me, "What the hell are you doing here, you're too young." I said, "What am I wearing this uniform for? I had it for two years." "Hell," he says, "you are too young to go to war, you will go when I go." I said, "I'll be there ahead of you." I was - I was right in the army on the 4th of August.

NARRATOR:

Many of them were young - pitifully young, but not all. The range of ages was as great as the reasons for going were varied.

FISH, Fred.:
4 Div. Arty

We were at Valcartier, my brother and I, and we saw a distinguished looking gentleman walking along in civvies, carrying a suitcase and I said to Colin my brother, "That looks like old Dad, the way that fellow walks, doesn't it?" He said, "Yes." And sure enough it was my father. He had sent his papers in to General Morrison and was told to report. He was fifty-four.

STEVENS, G.R.:
PPCLI

It was a great occasion and everybody was afraid they wouldn't have a chance to participate. That feeling was very widespread.

WALLIS, H.M.:
13th Btn.

It wasn't a question of whether you join or not but how quickly you could get into something and what you get into. I was near Winnipeg that summer. I joined there because I was there and I couldn't wait.

McLAREN, Jack:
PPCLI

I was up at Jackson's Point on Lake Simcoe. And I remember going over to the radial terminal half an hour before the trolley left in order to be sure to get a seat so that I could get back down to Toronto and enlist. I was afraid that the war would be over before I could get there. At most of the stops there were special editions of the Sunday World newspaper with screaming banner headlines in red telling us of awful catastrophes to the British Navy in the North Sea and countless other disasters which were, we discovered later, just all sheer fantasies, but circulation, of course, had to be maintained.

STERLING, W. C.:
4th Btn.

Nobody seemed to think that it would amount to much. They'd say "Ha, ha, you don't mean to tell me you are going over. Why the thing will be over before you get there." "Well," I said, "we are going to have the boat ride over and see the Old Country anyway."

ODLUM, V.W.:

We did like to tell others that we were of the heroic mold. But the truth of course is that all we of that generation who were on the younger side had the spirit of adventure in us and I think that a spirit of adventure took most of us there.

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L.:
5th Btn.

I wanted to see the world and I thought this would be a good opportunity. I didn't see how else I was going to ever get out of Yorkton, Sask., and see the world.

BERNIER, George:
14th Btn.

I went and joined there at the Carabinier of Montreal, the 65th. When the war was declared I was ready to join because I had always been liking to be a soldier and that's why I joined up. I was twenty.

FISH, Fred.:
4 Div. Arty

This upheaval came along, the war we'd heard about and thought about and had certain illusions about and you couldn't keep the fellows out.

MacDONNELL, J.M.:
4 Div. Arty

I can remember one of my friends saying, "Oh, won't it be grand when we get on board the troop ship and get away. I would have been perfectly content if the whole thing had been declared off right then and there. I will say that after I'd been in the army about six months, and I was the least adventurous person you could ever imagine, one began to feel well it will be rather dull if we don't see anything of this at all

NARRATOR:

In some the feeling of adventure grew slowly, after the journey to the battle had begun. Some say, honestly, that they seized on the chance to get out of Yorkton, or Jasper's Place, or Schubenacladie, to get away; to see the world. And we believe them. Nor do we doubt the word of those who claim a deeper motivation. It was a time when patriotism was a word in daily use.

MASON, D.H.C.:
3rd Btn.

A great deal has been said about the first lot being largely unemployed. That is bunk of the first order. Then again, I don't think there were very many in just for the fun of the thing, you know, the idea that it would be a great lark or anything of that kind. I mean the country was at war. One naturally went and took a hand.

DAWSON, F.:
7th Btn.

It was your patriotic duty. We all rallied to the flag.

SEAMAN, E.:
3rd Btn.

Everyone naturally has his own pride of race. You are proud of the country where you were born, unless you are a shyster. And if patriotism explains that feeling then it's the only word for it.

PRICE, C.B.:
14th Btn.

I started off as Regimental Sergeant Major, and these lads'd come up, and the questions they'd ask you could tell their hearts were very much in it.

STEVENS, G.R.:
PPCLI

There was an extraordinary feeling of dedication about the thing. What I would call the Rupert Brooke approach, "Now God be thanked who has caught us in this hour". That here there was something to hark back to away from the cosiness and the tawdriness of life in the century because the disillusion was already beginning that is so marked today.

NICHOLSON, N.:
16th Btn.

Some men that were turned down, I remember them weeping because they weren't accepted.

NARRATOR:

And most of those rejected were physically unfit to serve. But not all those who were rejected stayed that way.

FRASER, Norman:
LSHG

I went up with a number of my pals, among them Paul Duval. That was in Winnipeg, and we just signed up in the Fort Garry Horse. Afterwards when we got through, Paul said, "Well it's too bad we didn't get through, eh?" And I said, "What do you mean we didn't get through. I got through." "You did. Well, I'm bigger than you are. To hell with that, I'm going in again." So he got in at the tail-end of the line and went through and got by.

NARRATOR:

There were as many ways, apparently, of beating the medical as there were ills that flesh is heir to, and as many standards of fitness as there were examining officers.

ROSS, J.W.:
4 Div. Arty

The Doctor upstairs in the Armouries pushed some of the old R.F.A. men into the discard for flat feet, and I was downstairs with another Doctor who ignored the flat feet and signed them up. So instead of getting about eight percent of those that volunteered we were able to get about eighty percent, and we never regretted it.

STERLING, W. C.:
4th Btn.

The Doctor that examined me was our 36th Field Battalion Doctor, so I had to laugh when I went in to get examined. He says, "What's wrong with you?" And I says "Nothing". So he says, "What the hell do you want to get examined for?"

FRASER, Norman:
LSHG

There was a newspaper up on the wall and our eyesight test was the advertisement in the right-hand corner of this newspaper. Well I couldn't see the thing but I could see the shape of it. So I made a guess - Buddweiser Beer, and I was right. It was script.

BOYD, G.T.:
8th Btn.

I was turned down on account of me eyesight. Knowing the orderly room sergeant I went to him and I says, "Now you destroy that paper, mark me fit and I'll buy you a bottle." So that's how I got out to the active service.

FISH, Fred.
4 Div. Arty

In those days the fashion was padded shoulders and peg-top pants. I looked a noble figure in my suit, but when I stripped for the Doctor I was a pigeon-chested youth. So I just managed to scrape in, and I thought on the streetcar going home, I thought possibly people would see in me a future war-scarred hero. I was eighteen exactly and not too bright. And my uniform was not too well fitting. The britches, the fork came down to my knees. I had puttees like funnels, the wrong way around, and spurs, and when my father saw me he almost cried.

NARRATOR:

So there they were in August, 1914. The raw run-of-the-mine ore from which the hard steel of a great fighting force would be refined. Beardless youths and men past fifty. The butcher, the baker, the candle-stick maker; Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief; mustered in, signed on, and waiting for the word to concentrate at Valcartier. Waiting in improvised camps and living under canvas, or bedded down in horse stalls at a

(CONT)

NARRATOR: (CONT)

hundred county fair grounds; in arenas, in ice rinks, transformed to cavernous dormitories, or in the buildings of Provincial Exhibitions, or beginning to learn the rudiments of soldiering at one or another of the country's fifty-six brand new Armouries.

In the larger cities there was a crucial lack of facilities to house and feed the thousands so suddenly recruited. There the citizen soldiers simply lived at home, went to their jobs as usual, 9.00 to 6.00, and paraded each evening at the Armouries for basic training... a few in makeshift uniforms, or parts of uniforms; most in their civvies and showing the signs of their professions. Some accepting it all without a question. Some thinking of the road ahead. All learning foot drill and the manual of arms. All committed now to what would be the great adventure of their lives.

MacDONNELL, J.M.:
4 Div. Arty

We had, of course, little conception of what was ahead of us. The South African war had taken place fifteen years earlier and we had all met people from South Africa. But the actual fighting didn't seem to have involved many casualties and we certainly had no conception of what was going to happen. Namely, men being sent across flat fields against machine guns. That was something that wasn't dreamt of in our philosophy at all.

SINCLAIR, Ian:
13th Btn.

It's rather funny looking back on it now. Officer's training in the morning before breakfast was sword drill and we'd go through all the motions of attack and defence with a sword, which was the only time we ever used a sword in the course of the war.

SEAMAN, E.:
3rd Btn.

We were in Long Branch Camp for quite a while and they inoculated us one afternoon. And boy you know this inoculation made so many of the boys sick that the Daily News or something printed the next morning a terrible scandal to the effect that we were starting the war off drunk as skunks. But they retracted with a handsome apology on the front page afterwards.

MacDONNELL, J.M.:
4 Div. Arty

We used to get our pay dished out to us then in coin of the realm. The Paymaster would come around with a handful of bills and give us our money. And a young fellow called - I've forgotten his name for the moment - at any rate when he was first given this money he said, "What is this for?" They said, "This is your pay." "My God," he said, "do we get paid to fight?"

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L.:
5th Btn.

It never occurred to us that we were going to be paid. I knew they fed them and clothed them but I had no idea that they paid the army.

McLAUGHLIN, R.:
14th Btn.

We drilled during the evening and we went to our work in the daytime, you see. Then they issued a call. They put it up on the Star's bulletin in Montreal, the daily bulletins in front of the newspaper offices, for all the men who had enlisted to report to their Armouries immediately. So we weren't very long after that.

NARRATOR:

Not long after that the call to Valcartier went out by handbill and posted notice, by telegraph and telephone, by newspaper headline and door-to-door canvas. From the cities and towns and crossroads villages of the nation the units, large and small, moved off for their rendezvous at a partially cleared and ill-equipped tract of bushland eighteen miles from Quebec City.

STEVENS, W.:
14th Btn.

We left Montreal, I think, all the same night. The Vic's detachment left the Vic's Armoury, marched down along St. Catherine Street. The Guards then followed us, when we got down around Bleury or one of those streets and we all marched down to Morrow Street Station.

LABELLE, Joe:
14th Btn.

From the time we left the Armoury until we reached Morrow Station there was people lined up practically all the way. And I would say that the east end gave us a nice send-off.

BERNIER, George:
14th Btn.

Geez it was crowded in the streets there. We could hardly walk. The way I was dressed, oh that was funny how I was dressed. I was in civvies with the web equipment and a big bowler hat on. Gee what a funny army!

ROSS, J.W.:
4 Div. Arty

Some of the men had civilian caps, some had civilian pants, some had great coats. It was Coxey's army really.

McLAREN, Jack:
PPCLI

It was a hot August afternoon. The streets of Toronto were jammed with people. A good many of them with shoe boxes filled with sandwiches and cookies and candies and nuts which they thrust upon us during our march to this train with the wooden coaches and the woven straw seats and the coal oil lamps and that was waiting there for us on the siding.

LONGSTAFFE, C.E.:
15th Btn.

We was on the train there and just going to pull out and my youngest brother, he was only just a kid, he jumped aboard the train and I had to shove him off again. But he wasn't long after me anyway.

GRAHAM, W.R.:
2nd Btn.

We left Ottawa at six o'clock Saturday night, and I think we were the first regiment to leave Ottawa. We were reviewed on the station platform by the Governor General, the Duke of Connaught, that was King Edward the Seventh's brother.

GREEN, D.:
16th Btn.

The Seaforth Company from Vancouver marched up Georgia, down Granville, and outside the CPR Depot the crowd got quite enthusiastic and they got up and they pulled the trolleys off and the whole thing was stalled. Of course the war looked glamorous then. I left my clothes with my old landladies and sent a postcard to my sister in the Island saying I was gone.

WARREN, John G.:
LSHG

We all joined here in Winnipeg and went down with the mob. I was just nineteen and I just had fuzz on my face. That's when I had my first shave. I believe that when I wrote back home to my mother and told her that they issued me with a razor she cried.

McLAREN, Jack:
PPCLI,

We were raw and we were untrained boys and the great majority of us unused to the rigors and the heartbreaks of war and soldiering. Once the huzzahing crowds had been left behind one had the first real opportunity to sit down and give some thought to what would it really be like, you know, and would we be able to stand up against Kaiser Wilhelm's trained professional soldiers from Prussia. They were said to be the greatest and the strongest military machine ever assembled.

ROSS, J.W.:
4 Div. Arty

When we got to Valcartier it was the middle of the night. The 9th always seemed to land at a place in the middle of the rain in the middle of the night. So we found some old ammunition boxes, tied the horses to trees and set fire to these old ammunition boxes, getting wet on the back and dried out in front, and we spent the night standing. The next morning we were taken down to our quarters, and put up tents and got to work.

EYLES, George:
15th Btn.

We got off the train and here's a bag containing a tent and there's another bag with tent pegs and here's your poles and there's an axe and there's a mallet to hammer your tent pegs in, and now you'll be shown where to pitch your tent.

OREMOND, D.M.:
1 Div.

It was absolutely breaking new ground. There was nothing there at all. The brush had to be cut down. There was no latrine, there was nothing.

SINCLAIR, Ian:
13th Btn.

There were stumps all over the place. There were no roads, there were just sand tracks, and when a wind blew your food was filled with sand and your eyes and ears and everything else, and there were masses of horses and therefore masses of flies and things like that. They were all so green that everything seemed to be quite natural to us.

SEAMAN, E.:
3rd Btn.

There had never been a military camp there at all. Everything started from scratch, and they did a phenominal job.

EYLES, George:
15th Btn.

Well, we couldn't help but see the continued daily improvement in the construction of the camp. You see, there was nothing there, and before we had been there very long there was water laid on, there were ablution rooms, and decent toilets, and other things began to develop there you know.

OWENS, E.J.:
2nd Btn.

Cook tent was up, Paymaster's office was there. There was a box for the mail. The Medical Officer was there with a skull and crossbones painted all over his tent. The thing was organized right off. Whoever thought it out in such short notice must have been a real wizard.

LUNN, B.C.:
16th Btn.

Whether we liked Sam Hughes or no, somebody certainly did a lot of engineering there.

NARRATOR:

Sam Hughes. Colonel, afterward Major-General Sir Sam Hughes, the Minister of Militia, and surely one of the most controversial figures in Canadian history. A man of great determination, energy, and force of character. A man abrupt and often caustic in his speech who aroused in others either profound admiration or intense dislike; strong feelings that have lasted half a century. General Odlum, for example, one of Canada's most distinguished soldiers, thought highly of Sir Sam.

ODLUM, V. W.:

Sam Hughes was the father and the mother of that formation which we sent overseas at the beginning of the First World War. Without Sam Hughes it never would have gone. Although there were many features about him of which I could not approve, I consider Sam the biggest single contribution Canada made to that war.

NARRATOR:

An appraisal not universally subscribed to. Colonel Cooper of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Division, has often said

COOPER, H.S.:
3rd Btn.

....that Canada has produced the greatest genius that's ever been produced in the World's history. It took the greatest genius of all times to make the muck-up that he made up of the mobilization of the First Canadian Division. There was a mobilization scheme, a very delicate scheme to work out. As a matter of fact General French came here to Canada, I think it was in 1912, with a staff and reviewed the mobilization scheme, and it was passed on by the War Office. This chap, Sam Hughes, what he should have done and all he should have done was to go to his Headquarters, tell his Chief of Staff that the Cabinet had decided to go to war and to mobilize. The telegrams were all printed to go to the districts. The districts knew exactly what to do, and there would have been no confusion at all.

PANET, E. deB.:
1 Div.

I happened to be a regular soldier, and I was posted as General Staff Officer of the Quebec Division. We had this scheme, if you'll remember, that General Gwatkin prepared in case of war. So, eventually, the war came out and at once we took out this scheme from my safety deposit box there and looked at it to get ready to call up people. And then we got an order from General Gwatkin, who was Chief of the General Staff, ignore that scheme and Sam Hughes went out and said, "Boys, anybody that wants to come to the war come on to Quebec." So great hordes of people arrived. Extraordinary!

COOPER, H.S.:
3rd Btn.

I mean you were told, I was anyway, that in the event of war I would recruit about a dozen men and they would concentrate at the Regimental Headquarters, and then we were to have gone from there to Niagara Camp and we would have completed mobilization there. That was all laid down. Everybody had a job to do and knew

(CONT)

COOPER, H.S.: (CONT)
3rd Btn.

exactly what it was. We did virtually a practise mobilization in 1908. We went down there without any confusion at all and started to work next morning at six o'clock. And that's what we should have done the second time, do you see. Instead of that 33,000 men were shifted to Valcartier.

HOSSICK, K.C.:
13th Btn.

When you think that you can bring thirty-odd thousand soldiers from across Canada in a very short space of time, put them down practically a month after war was declared at Valcartier, undergo training, and arrange for a flotilla of ships to take you across, was no light job, I think a lot of credit must go to Sir Sam Hughes.

COOPER, H.S.:
3rd Btn.

Of course we got a lot of notice in that war as to when we would go to war. I was telephoned at half past five one night and told we were going to war and I had to be on the train at seven o'clock that night. And I can remember awfully well, Sam Hughes on a horse interviewing 1500 officers that he'd ordered to go to Valcartier and telling them that there'd be 500 that would be selected to go and the rest would go home, after being ordered to go to war. See, that's one of the samples of our friend Sam Hughes's marvellous organization.

ODLUM, V.W.:

I think that there is no man on our side in Canada who made such a contribution to that war as did Sam Hughes. Without Sam Hughes it never would have been done. But he had the imagination, he had the wild desire, he was a master-man, he was going to create a Canadian Force, and he did. I think it was a remarkable performance, the creation of Valcartier.

PRICE, C.B.:
14th Btn.

Sam Hughes had many many faults, but certainly the way he produced that and his engineers under him was a marvel.

COOPER, H.S.:
3rd Btn.

That was easy to arrange. You can order tents down. There were enough tents in Canada to accommodate us. A contract issued for the fixing up of the grounds - again if you've got money that was easy to arrange too. But it was all so unnecessary because going to Valcartier at that stage of the game without mobilization having been completed, no documentation done, no uniforms issued until we got there. It was horrible the mess-up there. Why mobilization wasn't completed until just before the Division sailed for the

MASON, D.H.C.:
3rd Btn.

It was unutterable confusion and nobody knew where we were at. It annoyed us intensely that Sam Hughes kept continually holding reviews in which he appeared as the Great Mogul, you see, and brought people down to see the marvellous war machine he had created.

ODLUM, V.W.:

Like many soldiers since then, he was a good actor. You saw him all the time. He was a picturesque creature and he played his part. Always on a horse, always picturesque, always in complete command of the whole thing. No one else was second to him, he was in command.

MORRISEY, T.S.:
13th Btn.

He gathered us all around him down at Valcartier and his last remarks, which ring in my ears, were "Well goodbye, boys, many of you won't come home, but never mind there will be others to take your place!" Always had a good laugh at Sam Hughes.

MacDONNELL, J.M.:
4 Div. Arty

I was, in many ways, irritated with Sir Sam but he had boundless energy and, furthermore, he was the man who stood up to Kitchener. When Kitchener wanted to break up our Canadian units and distribute them throughout the British Armies, Sam Hughes wouldn't have it, and he performed a great service to Canada and to the whole operation of the war by his courage in that encounter.

HOSSICK, K.C.:
13th Btn.

Well he was a great orator and he was a great organizer, there's no question of doubt about it. I think he did a brilliant job in the organization of that First Canadian Division.

PANET, E. deB.:
1 Div.

But, of course, it was the wrong way of doing it. Well it was just stupid that's all.

MASON, D.H.C.:
3rd Btn.

This may sound incredible, but I very vividly remember the rumour going around one day that the situation was so bad that the Duke of Connaught, by reason of his position as Commander-in-Chief, had taken over and was going to run the show, and everybody's hat was up in the air. We were all thrilled and delighted.

McMILLAN, A.:
R.C.D.

He didn't know anything about soldiering, nothing. So as soon as he was appointed Minister of Militia, knowing nothing about organization or anything of the sort, he sat down and did it by Sam Hughes' example.

- ODLUM, V.W.: It was determination and his power with his own Government that made it possible to create a Canadian Division.
- HOSSICK, K.C.:
13th Btn. I cannot of course discuss the political situation because I don't know what it was.
- COOPER, H.S.:
3rd Btn. The chief thing at Valcartier was you had to be a good Tory, and I mean Tory, not a Conservative.
- GREEN, D.:
16th Btn. He was quite a lad, mind you. I didn't admire him in many ways but he was an organizer and he got things done.
- ODLUM, V.W.: I think the imagination that Sam Hughes had was a wonderful thing.
- MASON, D.H.C.:
3rd Btn. It wouldn't have surprised any of us if somebody had assassinated Sam Hughes.
- McMILLAN, A.:
R.C.D. He was a good lacrosse player in his youth.
- NARRATOR: Historians will doubtless disagree to the end of time on Sam Hughes and his mobilization scheme, and while they live old soldiers will argue his antic genius, his ability to somehow get things done, against his fearful blunders.
- But whatever his merits and defects there was one Regiment that escaped his influence for good or ill. This was the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. Unique in the Canadian Corps and without a parallel in the combined Allied Armies; raised, equipped and maintained at the personal expense of a Montreal millionaire and having as its Honorary Colonel-in-Chief the Governor General's daughter, this Unit was different from all the rest in that

NARRATOR: (CONT)

important ways. Recruited at top speed and mustering in men who, for the most part, had had experience of soldiering, it was to be first overseas and first in the field. A token force; an earnest of the thousand more to come.

The Princess Patricia, now Lady Patricia Ramsay, tells of the raising of her Regiment.

LADY PATRICIA
RAMSAY:

I am delighted to have been asked as Colonel-in-Chief to give some of my personal recollections of the raising of the Regiment, nearly fifty years ago. I think I had perhaps best read you a few of the facts from the excellent Regimental History which was written by Rafe Harlow-Williams in 1923. The initial start was made by the founder of the Regiment, Mr. Hamilton Gault as he then was, of Montreal, seeing the Minister of Militia and suggesting that he should raise and equip a unit for immediate active service. Mr. Gault's generous offer was quickly acted upon and the Battalion was very soon in being.

McLAREN, Jack:
PPCLI

The origin of the Princess Patricias Regiment just doesn't have any parallel in British military annals. It was financed and brought into being by one man, Hamilton Gault. He may have been the last private citizen to have raised a fighting force on behalf of his country and his sovereign and to have paid for it, and thereafter to have led it in battle. To him must be ascribed the regimental esprit and all that goes to create the soul of a fighting machine. Now that is a great record. He was young, he was handsome, he had cash. He might have been a playboy but he chose to take this path.

BARCLAY, G.:
PPCLI

Hammy Gault. There is nobody like Hammy Gault - nobody on God's green earth. Twenty-five years after I had quit wearing a uniform the minute I saw Hammy Gault I stood at attention and said Sir without even thinking about it.

McLAREN, Jack:
PPCLI

Somebody said of him after he died a few years ago, that if we ever put a monument up to Hammy he'd come back and knock it down because that's the sort of fellow he was. However, whether we build a monument or not there's a monument there because

LEE, Harold:
PPCLI

I think that he wanted to make a significant, immediate contribution to the war effort, and I think he felt that the best way to do that was to appeal to the chaps who had been in the Boer War.

HANCOX, George T.:
PPCLI

You see Major Gault had been in the South African War and he was intensely patriotic, and he saw there was an excellent chance to get together a lot of the chaps who'd been in the Imperial Army; others who'd been in the Canadian services, and with this nucleus they were able to recruit quite a number of men, most of whom had previous service.

LADY PATRICIA
RAMSAY:

The response of the recruiting was wonderful. I quote 'Prospectors, trappers, guides, cowpunchers, prize fighters, farmers, professional and business men and, above all, old soldiers poured into Ottawa by every train.' Headquarters wrote, in filling up an official form, place of origin, "All over the world".

STEVENS, G.R.:
PPCLI

In Edmonton, the Legion of Frontiersmen were first to go. They had mobilized in their regalia -- bushranger hats, khaki shirts and neckerchiefs. Like the Edmonton Pipe Band in full Highland kit and Hunting Stuart Tartan, they fetched up at Lansdowne Park. Thus began Edmonton's long association with Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

SCOTT, Louis:
PPCLI

I was working as an office engineer in Edmonton and recruits were being called for the 19th Alberta Dragoons, which was a local militia unit. Unfortunately, their own men had to receive first consideration. I was told that I would be considered if I came back the next day. However, in that night's newspaper I discovered that the Princess Patricias, which called for men with former army service, were being recruited and so I immediately went into town again and enlisted in the Princess Patricias.

LITTLE, G.W.:
PPCLI

Under the conditions of enlistment it was inevitable that nearly all should have been born in the Old Country. Less than ten percent of the originals were of Canadian origin. Out of a total strength of 1,098, 1,049 had been with the colours and possessed 771 decorations and medals. 456 had seen war service. Two sections were composed entirely of ex-Guardsmen. There was no matching the composition of the originals in the history of British arms.

YOUNG, F.G.:
PPCLI

When the war broke out I was in Toronto, and I thought to myself "Well now I'm going straight back to England and join the Old London Irish Rifles." And then what did I see? There was going to be a special regiment raised in Canada. Not only were the officers to be regular soldiers but the rank and file. Well now I hadn't served in the regular Army, but I knew that there was a regular Irish Regiment called the Irish Rifles so I decided if I just called myself ex-Irish Rifles then I was a regular soldier. So I passed my medical and I had to go before a certain Major Pelley, and he said to me, "What were you in, Young?" I said "I was in the Irish Rifles, Sir." He said, "Oh, I knew a lot of officers in the Irish Rifles." I thought to myself, "Of course you would just because I don't know them".

And then he started putting questions to me and talking about Major O'Halloran or Captain McGinity, and I didn't know them from Adam but I managed to struggle through for a while, and then I said, "Well do you know I think I'd better come clean, Sir." And he said "I think you had. What is all this?" And then I told him how I was London Irish Rifles - Territorial Force - that I'd not been in the regular army. And he said, "Ho, that's different, isn't it?" And I thought "Well this is where I'm out if I'm not careful." And then I told him how I put in the full four years with them, done the annual fifteen days training, all the necessary drills, and after a bit of humming and hawing he said, "Well, Young, were you classed as a shot?" I said, "Yes," and he said "What class?" I said "First Class". He said, "Oh." Then he wrote in the book and he said "Your number in the Regiment is No. 196".

O'CONNELL, H.F.:
PPCLI

When the 1914-18 war broke out I was stationed in Alberta as a Sergeant in the Royal Northwest Mounted Police. When my time expired the Patricias were on the water - they had started to sail for England. Well I went down country and tried to enlist at Montreal and they told me that of course the war would be over by Christmas; so if I'd like to make my own way over to England, quite all right. I waited around the docks - I went around all the pubs there and asked different sailors if I could get a passage over, and one afternoon one chap came along to me and said "If you are willing to live down in the hold, you can get transportation over to England, there's a boat sailing this afternoon." And I was on board inside of half an hour. So I went down to Salisbury Plain and I was taken before the Commanding Officer, Colonel Farquhar and of course he asked me why I didn't join in Canada and I showed him my parchment discharge which showed I wasn't able to get a discharge.

NARRATOR:

Not all were British born, nor were they all old soldiers. Some few prairie youths, as green as spring corn, were taken on because they were good riflemen.

HANCOX, George T.:
PPCLI

I joined up in Moose Jaw; I came down with a legion of frontiersmen. Colonel Farquhar came around and inspected us all at Lansdowne Park. I stood there and I thought, "Sure, well this is it." But he passed me by. Probably he took pity on me because I was so young. I'm not sure whether I was actually the youngest but I was one of three and four chaps who were well under twenty. There were others who had no military service, but they were chaps who had been living in Western Canada and most of the youngsters in the West at that time, it was real prairies then, they could use a rifle. We used to go out shooting gophers and one thing and another. We were in fairly good physical shape and after a little bit of training we were probably just as good as some of the old soldiers.

LADY PATRICIA
RAMSAY:

The eleven hundred men who were accepted were chosen in nine days from a very large number of applicants. Some seamen and marines represented the Royal Navy and every regiment of the regular Army but one was represented in the PPCLI.

NIVEN, H.:
PPCLI

We missed one and when we got to England a sergeant was sent up to London and he was given ten days to find one of these fellows and bring him back so that we had a representative of every regiment in the British Army.

HANCOX, George T.:
PPCLI

There's no doubt about it. I think the regiment probably could have gone into action a month or two after they were formed. As it is they went in four months after being formed and gave a very good account of themselves. I know a youngster like myself with no great military experience, the fact you were with these experienced men you soon learned; whereas an entire battalion of raw recruits, it probably took months and months and months just to get them to do simple military duties.

LADY PATRICIA
RAMSAY:

At Colonel Francis Farquhar's suggestion, approval was sought and obtained to call the Battalion after me and so, from its very inception, I came to be closely connected with the Regiment and all its fortunes through these very many years. It would be difficult to express in any way at all adequate the intense pride and affection I have always felt for my famous and magnificent Regiment. The gallantry, bravery and devotion to duty which the Regiment has shown unflinchingly ever since it came into being are beyond any powers of mine to praise. I can only render homage, and this I do with all my heart. Believe me, I am indeed honoured that my name should be borne by such troops as Prince Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry have shown themselves to be.

HETHERINGTON, H.G.:
PPCLI

I know that the feeling that we had a great Colonel-in-Chief grew and grew and grew but at the very start I don't think it made a great impact. Then the thing grew on the Regiment until, in the end, we were very much the Patricias.

LADY PATRICIA
RAMSAY:

I was very anxious to give the Battalion some present to take overseas, and I first thought of a set of bugles, but Colonel Farquhar much wished for a camp colour instead, such as the Brigade of Guards have and so a camp colour it was. There seemed no possibility of getting one made in the short time of under two weeks, which was available, so I set to work to design and work the colour myself. The staff was homemade, being fashioned by our house carpenter from walnut wood grown in Government House Grounds. This colour, which I presented to the Battalion at the close of a Church Parade in Lansdowne Park, at a very moving ceremony, became the only colour carried into action by a British unit during the Great War of 1914-1918.

NIVEN, H.W.:
PPCLI

A few days before we left Ottawa the Duke of Connaught decided to give a dinner to the Regiment and, at the end of the dinner, all the Officers, in seniority, stood up and thanked His Royal Highness until we came to the latest joined subaltern, Talbot Papineau. This young French Canadian was not at all anxious to get up but, for thirty minutes, the grandest burst of oratory that I have ever heard in my life came from Talbot Papineau. No one will ever forget it that he did it. His Royal Highness got up and walked solemnly down to shake hands with this unknown subaltern and he turned to us and he said, "Gentlemen, we owe this young man a very great debt and I predict a wonderful future for him."

NARRATOR:

And there were many among Talbot Papineau's comrades in arms who recognized in the young subaltern a future Prime Minister of Canada but Talbot Papineau, grandson of Louis-Joseph, the great French Canadian patriot and rebel leader, was to die for the common cause in the mud of Passchendaele as autumn passed to winter 1917. One of how many promising careers cut short; at a cost to Canada beyond all reckoning.

In 1914, the first and oldest of the British Colonies of North America stood apart from Canada politically. Newfoundland, while always geographically a part of the British North American community, was in closer contact with the Mother Country than with its near neighbour to the west. When the call to arms was sounded Newfoundland responded instantly.

O'DRISCOLL, J.:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

When war broke out I was quite a junior. I was only fourteen years of age so I wasn't lucky enough to get in until 1915. However, you probably have heard that Newfoundland had the distinction of being the first of the Overseas Dominions to offer help to England in the First World War.

McPHERSON, Cluny:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

Right after the war started our adventurous boys started to go away and the Governor called this public meeting and they discussed raising a force. A motion was put that we raise five hundred.

FROST, C. S.:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

The young men wanted to enlist even before there were any volunteers called for. There seemed to be a terrifically patriotic feeling and, before many days, they had their first five hundred which was the number allotted.

McPHERSON, Cluny:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

We had no armed forces here whatsoever. The militia had been withdrawn in the 1860's and all we had here

MARTIN, W. Ron:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

Like many things in Newfoundland, everything was organized on a sort of denominational line, so you can imagine the rivalry in everything.

McPHERSON, Cluny:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

Well, each of the Colonels of these different brigades stepped forward and offered the facilities of their Armouries and whatever they had in the way of equipment at the service of whatever force was raised.

MARTIN, W. Ron:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

The term Boys' Brigades, I suppose, is a misnomer actually. There was no age limit, and we had men, quite mature men who were N.C.O.'s and Officers in these Brigades and the basic training, as far as we understand it, was exactly the same as the British Army. When the war broke out it seemed a natural thing for those of us who were in these Boys' Brigades to offer our services. In fact, the first contingent was almost entirely made up of members of these Boys' Brigades.

NARRATOR:

But to most usefully employ their native talents and give the cause the full value of their experience afloat, most young Newfoundlanders headed for the Navy.

WHELAN, J.:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

I don't know why I found myself in the Army. I'm a sailor. I was mate on a ship and I was going to join the Navy but we had some four thousand Naval Reserve men in Newfoundland and you just couldn't buy yourself into the Navy and I, like a few more, was afraid there was something going on we weren't going to see and I joined the Army.

FROST, C.S.:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

Our first uniform was just a khaki drill and they didn't have the material to make khaki puttees so we had blue puttees until we were equipped in England with proper uniforms and we, from then onward, were known as the Blue Puttees.

McPHERSON, Cluny:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

We soon got more men together than we could keep around loose and we formed a camp down at Pleasantville. We got them under canvas there and I don't know how many days afterwards there was a tremendous rainstorm which flooded the place.

McPHERSON, Cluny: (cont) The Governor got in his carriage and pair and
Royal Nfld.Rgt. thought he'd go down and see how they were recovering
from the deluge and, at the gate, he found the
Corporal of the Guard had turned out the guard to
receive him and he said, "Well, my lad, this is a
wonderful turnout the way you've done this. Why the
Guards couldn't do it better. Where did you get your
training?" "Oh, in the Guards, Sir." "Oh, I thought
so. My brother-in-law is in charge of the Coldstream
Guards. Which of the Guards were you in?" "Oh, the
Methodist Guards, Sir," he says.

NARRATOR: Across Canada that August, and for many a day to
come, the bands played and the flags waved and the
men marched and the crowds cheered and Valcartier Camp
grew and prospered while a chapter was written that
would change our nation's story.

Next week in this chronicle of WORLD WAR I we
will hear eye-witness accounts of how the First
Division trained, of the convoy overseas, and of the
travail of Salisbury Plain.

ANNOUNCER: The first-person accounts of WORLD WAR I were
researched, arranged and edited under the direction of
Frank Lalor.

The series, originated by A. E. Powley, is
written, narrated, and produced by J. Frank Willis.

MacDONNELL, J.M.:
4 Div. Arty.

I think the best test of Canada was the action of the government. Of course at that time the constitutional position was such that when England declared war we were at war. We didn't have to declare it ourselves as we did in 1939. But what we did to prepare for it was another thing and the government showed great energy and great expedition in getting ready to send their first men overseas.

ANNOUNCER:

Ladies and gentlemen: The CBC presents "THE GREAT EXPEDITION", being the third chapter of "FLANDERS' FIELDS", a story of the Canadian Army in World War I.

Last week you heard how the Force was mustered in from all the Provinces and the Yukon Territory; how in a single month of feverish activity and patriotic fervor one hundred thousand men had offered themselves for service and how 33,000 had been accepted to go under canvas at Valcartier. How the P.P.C.L.I. was formed in Ottawa and trained at Lansdowne Park.

Today, the men who served in the Canadian Corps take up their story anew to tell of the rough and tumble life in Sam Hughes' Camp, the forming of Battalions, and of the journey overseas and the toughening-up process in the rain on Salisbury Plain. "FLANDERS' FIELDS": Part Three, "The Great Expedition"

ODLUM, V.W.:

General Sam Hughes was a big man, with a big idea, and he was an impatient man. He could not take the time to wait for battalions to be formed locally and he brought them down in pieces as they were ready. Then at Valcartier they had to be sorted out and put together into battalions.

NARRATOR:

But who it was who did the sorting out no man can tell - - - or more accurately, many men can tell and each a different story.

If ever an army learned to do by doing, this was it.

YOUNG, N.M.:
4th Btn.

We were the 4th and 7th and the 11th Battalions within four days but we eventually came out the 4th Battalion.

BAGSHAW, F.B.:
5th Btn.

We didn't know who we were, we didn't know who the officers were. But we were all called out on parade and this dapper officer, boots shining, and as immaculate as could be, he stood on a soap box. He said, "This unit will be known in future as the 5th Canadian Battalion. Edward Hilliam, Captain and Adjutant, H I L L I A M, Hilliam, and don't you forget it. " So that's how we were formed.

ODLUM, V.W.:

The 7th Battalion was formed very largely by what you would call military politics. The groups were there, there was no one in command to organize them. We got together and we just reported that we had formed a battalion. And Sam Hughes took it.

JACOBS, A.G.:
LSHG

I certainly didn't want to go in an Infantry battalion. My idea was to gallop around with a sword, so I found a friend in the Strathconas and we went down and passed the riding test and got put on their waiting list, went to the R.C.D.'s and got on their waiting list to make sure, and then to the R.C.H.A., and finally to a new Corps that had horses, the Ammunition Column. They had one horse. You got on it and you rode it to a post about a hundred yards away. If you didn't fall off they passed you as a horseman. I got back to my battalion, the 5th battalion, and the next morning they threw me out onto the street, thousands of miles from home. And they owed me eighteen days pay at that time, but out we were and don't make any error about it. Not only myself, but thirty others. However, the Strathconas took care of us. The second in command told the officers mess sergeant to put us to work in the kitchen, and we did various other jobs like bringing in a package of groceries with a case of whisky in the middle of it. And then the order came to mobilize, and we were taken on strength of the Strathconas and the next time I saw the 5th battalion we relieved them in France.

NARRATOR: If the forming of battalions was conducted with all the informality of youngsters choosing sides for a sandlot ball game, there was a correspondingly casual attitude toward money matters.

CHRISTOPHERSON,
R.L.:
5th Btn.

One day we were notified there was a pay parade. I got the shock of my life. I went around and they asked me how long I had been soldiering and I figured it from the day I got to Valcartier and I didn't draw very much pay compared to the other fellows. So I just went over to another unit and got in the line and I got the rest of my pay there.

COOPER, H.S.:
3rd Btn.

There was a 17th Battalion formed for the surplus that I presume would have been held as a reinforcement reserve. We were told to parade at a certain time and a chap came down. He was O.C. And he looked around and he turned to a chap just happened to be the nearest one to him and he said, "Will you act as Adjutant until further orders". So the chap that was acting as Adjutant, he said, "Here, Cooper, you're Paymaster," do you see, just like that, not the faintest bit of authority. I walked up to Headquarters and I said, "I've been appointed Paymaster for the 17th Battalion." And, "Oh," he said, "what 17th Battalion?" And I said, "Well, I don't know, we're first brigade." And he said "Well, I suppose we'll call it the First Brigade, 17th Battalion". And I said, "Well, I came up to get some money". And he said, "Oh, how much money do you want?" And I said, "Well, you better give me a couple of thousand dollars". So I got a couple of thousand dollars. I got back to where the unit was. And the Adjutant was still there, and I said, "When do you want a pay parade?" Well he almost gasped. And he said, "Pay parade?" I said, "Yes. I've got the money here." So with that I mean they gathered up some chaps and I went on paying Officers and other ranks that reported to me as being in the 17th Battalion. Now I didn't know whether they were or not. That was a sample of what went on there, you see.

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L.:

5th Btn.

Two or three fellows didn't have any scruples at all. They just went in all the lines. They came out with quite a nice payroll.

NARRATOR:

One Pay Sergeant named Fisher shared an orderly room table with a Colonel named Currie.

FISHER, A.H.:

8th Btn.

I was Pay Sergeant. I shared a tent with Lipsett. Lipsett was our Colonel. Lipsett had his tent as an orderly room, and there was just a sheet between us. And Lipsett came in one day and he said, "Will you make enough space at your table for this Officer to work." This fellow was a Colonel. I said, "Yes, sir." So I pushed my papers on one side and this Colonel worked by the side of me, and when he went to lunch I'd push his papers out of the way, and when I went to lunch he'd shove my papers out of the way and he'd work there. That fellow finally became Corps Commander, that was Colonel Currie.

YOUNG, N.M.:

4th Btn.

It was a real civilian army, organized very hurriedly, and it was astonishing how any integration was established but it was.

WILLIS:

There was a small hard core of old sweats. I suppose since the world began when 30,000 men are gathered together some of them are bound to be old soldiers.

YOUNG, N.M.:

4th Btn.

Thirty percent of our men had had experience in the South African war or some other campaign and they, particularly the non-commissioned Officers, were the backbone of the integration that followed. Every high school student looked upon those men as heroes stepping straight out of a Henty story.

TROWLES, Victor:

4th Btn.

We had one old fellow in the tent. Well we'd call him a barrack room lawyer now. But he could quote the King's regulations by the yard. And we used to sit down with our mouth open and listen to him. Now I know it was somewhat exaggerated, but a non-commissioned Officer with one ribbon up, oh he was something, you see. We just listened to him as if he was a tin god. We'd pester the life out of the fellow.

BAGSHAW, F.C.:

5th Btn.

I began to catch on to the old soldiers, their ways, you know. The Sergeant Major was an old soldier and I remember him one day stark naked, standing under the bath pipe, and he had a scar and some fellow said to him "That's quite a wound, Sergeant Major." He said, "Yes, I got that in the Zulu War." And of course he'd had an operation for appendicitis.

JACOBS, A.G.:

LSHG

Many things happened like that. I was thrown all my clothes in a heap in the Q.M. Stores and I was told to get out. I grabbed up the corners of my blanket, carried it over to my tent, dropped the whole thing and sat down and looked at it when a friendly permanent soldier came along. And he said, "How's things, kid?" "Oh," I said, "look at that stuff, look at it," and held these pants up. I was five foot six and I'm sure the pants I had could have gone on a six foot four man. Well we discussed it for a very short time and he explained that he could arrange, for a couple of dollars if I had any money, to get me fitted. These boys reaped a harvest. One pal threw everyone everything that didn't fit, and the other strolled through the lines and made arrangements for him to be nicely fitted in the back of the Q.M. marquee by his pal. I got to know all these people quite well afterwards and I may say that right now I think it was quite legitimate.

BAGSHAW, F.C.:

5th Btn.

Well there were a lot of darn fine chaps, you know. They taught us all we knew about soldiering and they taught us how to behave.

CHAMBERS, J.I.:

7th Btn.

The thing I remember mostly about Valcartier was trying to make civilians into soldiers. When we joined up we'd go to the Colonel and say, "Say, Bub, when do we eat?", something of that kind, you see. We always got into difficulty through not knowing what we were supposed to be doing.

ODLUM, Maj.V.W.:

Command was not easy and the Commander had to have the qualities of command or his men ran him. It wasn't easy but it worked out because the last man wanted to start off for Europe so they were willing to fall in line. And they did, they played the game.

PRICE, C.B.:

14th Btn.

Considering the heterogeneous state of the units in the Division and the fact that so many men had no training, the surprising thing wasn't that there was a lack of discipline, but that there wasn't far more.

PRICE, C.B.:
14th Btn.

Of course what you've got to remember was that the worst threat you could make to a man was that he'd be sent home, and I think that was the best maintainer of discipline there was.

LEWIS, Victor:
4th Btn.

I can remember they'd fall in in the morning and somebody would start giving orders and somebody would have an argument, "You're not doing it right," and I've seen one take off his coat and put it down and say, "Well, if you know better than I do about it come out here and do it." And they would, until we got some real old British Sergeant-Majors. That started a new phase.

FISH, Fred:
4 Div. Arty.

I got on very good terms with the Regimental Sergeant-Major. I mistook him for the Duke of Connaught. We'd been inspected the day before by Sam Hughes and the Duke and I saw this magnificent figure of a man approaching with a Sam Brown belt on and so I turned the guard out and presented arms to him, you see, and he said, "Why did you do that?" I said, "You're an Officer, sir, aren't you?" He said, "No, I'm not, I'm your Regimental Sergeant-Major." So he said, "Who did you think I was?" I said, "I thought you were the Duke of Connaught." I never looked back after that. I was in with him all right, and he was our new Sergeant-Major.

TROWLES, Victor:
4th Btn.

I would think the success of Valcartier Camp was due to the spirit of the men themselves. They were only too willing to do anything at any time by anybody who told them. I never met that kind of spirit in any conglomeration of men, never.

NARRATOR:

Some measure of this burning desire to qualify and to get on with it was reflected in the willingness with which these vigorous young men conformed to what Major Fred. Fish described as a "monastic life."

FISH, Fred:
4 Div. Arty.

There was a tremendous keenness in the quality about the old first crowd. Morale, or whatever you'd like to call it, was very high. No wet canteens. People were forbidden to go outside the camp and it was rather a monastic sort of life, but it was just the stuff for people who were very anxious to qualify and to learn their job.

NARRATOR: That cliché phrase "From every walk of life" might well have originated here ...

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L.:
5th Btn.

We had engineers and lawyers and doctors. We had everything enlisted as privates. One of my best pals was a burglar. He said he wanted to join the army so they let him out of jail. And he was a very fine fellow. If you got into a fight believe me you didn't want anybody better than Stan. along with you.

JOHNSON, C.J.:
14th Btn.

We settled down, I thought, pretty well. We got into tents down there and we had our usual training to do and guard duties to do. But when we were on the loose we were pretty well all around the place. But it didn't matter whether we got in before lights out or not, we were always there on the job.

ROSS, J.W.:
4 Div. Arty.

Valcartier, to my mind, was an excellently planned camp. We had water supplies. We had lots of food. Everybody was in good spirits and we had good weather.

YOUNG, N.M.:
4th Btn.

We had our bathing parades, and an order came out that dress regulations are not being adhered to on bathing parades. Hereafter dress regulations will be strictly adhered to. The authorized dress was great coats, towel over the left shoulder, and deck shoes. The Cyclists wore what was called 'pea jackets', a very short great coat that only came to the hips. Now in order to get to the baths we had to pass the H.Q. building in which there were a lot of female employees. So on this occasion dress regulations were strictly adhered to and the Cyclist Corps went by on the bathing parade wearing their pea jackets which came scarcely to their hips, towel over the left shoulder, and their deck shoes, to the great enjoyment of the female staff who were crowding out of every window.

NARRATOR: And it was a dry camp . . . officially, concert parties and troop shows were far in the future. The nights were long.

Production 6: A World of Stealth

The decimated units of the First Canadian Division were no sooner reinforced after the battle of Ypres than they were marched south to the area of Festubert. Here they were joined by the units of the Cavalry Brigade who had recently volunteered to go to France dismounted and fight in the infantry trenches.

On the 18th of May Canadian units went over the top at Festubert to take their part in General



Haig's Aubers Ridge offensive. The attack was not very successful and it very quickly revealed two of the main problems that faced the Allied armies at that stage of the War: the lack of artillery shells and the power of German machine guns. The later attack at Givenchy was equally costly in lives and equally revealing.

At that stage of the War our guns were limited to three rounds per gun per day, except for special emergencies. Shells were not only few in number, they were poor in quality and our own guns often killed our own men in the line as shells fell short of their objectives.

"Store boughten" hand grenades were almost non-existent. The men made their own bombs with empty tins of Ticklers Jam and bits of scrap and explosives.

Despite these hardships, the Canadians soon settled into the line as veteran troops. In September, 1915, the Second Canadian Division arrived in France and entered the line in the area of Ploegsteerte-Messines, beside the veterans of the First Division, and the Canadian Corps was formed. By December units of the Third Division were joining them in France while a Fourth Canadian Division was being formed in Canada.

During the miserable winter of 1915-16, the Canadian troops in France began to show their mettle as innovators, prepared to tear up the "book" and invent their own kind of tactics. In the middle of November, the Second Brigade conducted an elaborate night raid on the German trenches. It was the predecessor of many further raids which vastly enhanced the reputation of the Canadians for initiative and daring. The techniques of the raids were soon adopted by all the Allied forces but they remained a specialty of the Canadians till the end of the static warfare. It was their answer to the bitter frustrations of the long stalemate.

Production 7: Apprentices at Arms

In the spring, the Second Canadian Division took part in the abortive British attack at St. Eloi in the Ypres Salient. The British had undermined the German positions and had blown them up at the end of March 1916. The Canadians then took over to hold the resulting craters. The whole operation was an example of the bad planning and inadequate leadership which characterized the period. Canadian losses were heavy, but not as heavy as the losses they would sustain a few weeks later when the Germans reversed the action at St. Eloi and blew the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles out of their trenches in front of Mount Sorrel. Under the German assault the Canadian line crumbled, but the Corps was equal to the test and, despite repeated attempts, the Germans failed to achieve a break-through. On the contrary, on the night of the 12th to 13th of June, the Corps recovered most of their territorial losses. The battles of Mount Sorrel, Hooghe, and Sanctuary Wood, and the other names by which these actions were known, marked a great step forward in the history of the Corps.

The summer of 1916 was not an eventful period for most Canadians. They did not take part in the early weeks of the great Somme offensive which began on July the 1st. But the Newfoundlanders of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment did take part on that sad and bloody day. The unit was almost wiped out as it tried to follow up the advancing British troops who were being cut to pieces near a village called Beaumont Hamel.

Production 8: The Somme

During the first week of September the Canadian forces marched south from the Ypres Salient to make their contribution to Haig's disastrous offensive on the Somme, which had been consuming British lives by the tens and hundreds of thousands since the early days of July. On the 3rd of September the First Canadian Division began relieving the Australians in the area of Mouquet Farm near the village of Courcellette.

On the 15th of September the Second and Third Divisions assaulted and captured the village of Courcellette, an attack which was to mark the first appearance of a machine that would one day replace the cavalry and restore mobility to warfare, the tank. The attack was costly, but in terms of the Somme, in general, it was a successful action. In the weeks that followed the three Canadian Divisions would attack again and again to advance a few hundred yards over shell-pocked, corpse-strewn land, criss-crossed by German defences. Hessian Trench and Kenora Trench and, above all, Regina Trench, would be pounded and stabbed and battered into the Canadian subconscious as walls of human flesh were flung against German machine guns. When the first three Divisions were relieved in the middle of October, the newly arrived Fourth Division would take its place in the line.

Allied forces had at last caught up with the Germans in equipment. But the Somme had revealed that it takes more than bravery and equipment to win. Brave men must be wisely led and equipment has to be properly used.

LONGSTAFFE, C.E.:(cont)

15th Btn. one gave me a leg up, you know. But I never landed on his back. The three of us, the one that was holding his head, he was about five yards up the road laying on his back and us two was laying right there on our backs. The horse had disappeared, so he wasn't so gentle after all. And it took the cavalry I don't know how long to round all these horses up again. Fancy sending a bunch like us to collect them.

LEWIS, Victor:
4th Btn.

They brought horses in from the West, unbroken, and something happened one night down there. I'm not sure whether it was a thunderstorm or something like that but the horses broke loose.

YOUNG, N.M.:
4th Btn.

We could only see what you might call shadows, that is it was quite dark and we had no efficient lighting system at the camp, but you could see that they were horses and that they were stampeded.

GREEN, Elliot:
Arty. 4 Div.

They were the other side of the River. And the engineers had put up a temporary bridge there and to hear the horses pounding over this floating bridge it was a very eerie experience. And luckily when they came towards our line the horses swerved. If they'd gone straight ahead they'd have gone right through the tents and we were all sleeping or in the tents somewhere.

OWENS, E.J.:
2nd Btn.

They were making for the river and some of them got in. And we got in and tried to do what we could rescuing the horses.

SEAMAN, E.:
3rd Btn.

Some of the officers got out with the men and they went in the water and dragged out these horses and a lot of fun before they got these horses all put to bed again.

CHARD, N.:
R.C.D.

The RCD's had about seventy-odd horses and one afternoon our Colonel decided that it would be a nice thing if he could practise a cavalry charge with drawn swords. And he gave us a little bit of a pep talk on what we would do and how we would act and one of the things he said was when they give the command charge we were to give a lusty cheer and we were to charge. Well we were on just a nice gentle slope and they give this lusty cheer and the horses went every which way you like and my horse made pretty much straight for Colonel Nellis. With one hand I just had a heck of a time to keep the horse from running smack into him. There was

JACOBS, A.G.:

LSHG

Never anywhere did thirty thousand practically all untrained men get gathered in such a small area, and oh how untrained we were. We went to the range and started banging away, without any preliminary training of any kind. The type of officer who commanded didn't consider that you needed to be much of a shot as long as you had the guts to get up and go straight at 'em or wait till you see the whites of the eye.

NARRATOR:

And what training the Artillery got was no less sketchy.

ROSS, J.W.:

Arty. 4 Div.

During our stay at Valcartier, Constantine, who later on became General Constantine, came to me one day and said, "We have some shells made in the Dominion Arsenal and I want you to try them out." So I had my little Sergeant, and he had his gun put out on a hill-top and we fired over the cavalry lines at a sheet, but I was told to be careful and not hit the sheet if possible, because it was the only one they had.

ODLUM, V.W.:

Because we didn't know what the type of war was going to be, the training could only be the old training that we had, continued one step further. It was based upon the use of the rifle. We hadn't thought of a trench war and we didn't dig trenches down at Valcartier. We were trying to guess what the boys over in Europe would be doing. We were sure that the British Army was the finest and the last word in an army, and all we had to do was to go over there and pick up their ways.

LEWIS, Victor:

4th Btn.

We didn't actually soldier until 1915 when we were on Salisbury Plains.

NARRATOR:

But in Ottawa's Lansdowne Park, the PPCLI comprised, as it was of experienced fighting men of all ranks, had completed a three-week long refresher course in soldiering and were now ready to move off.

MARSDEN, William:

PPCLI

Within twenty-one days of being organized we were ready to proceed to France. We marched through the streets of Montreal to the docks, got on board the "Mascout" and sailed from Montreal.

HETHERINGTON, H.G.:

PPCLI

We got down to Quebec and then we were stopped by the Admiralty, who issued orders that troop ships were not to proceed across the Atlantic without convoy, so we put back to Quebec and disembarked.

MARSDEN, William:

PPCLI

It was ugly for a time. They almost refused to get off the boat, so Colonel Farquhar spoke to them and he told us, I won't take you to Valcartier, I'll take you to Levis. We'll go into a camp on our own.

HETHERINGTON, H.G.:

PPCLI

At Levis Camp we went under canvas and did a month's training there which was really a God-send to the regiment. We'd had no chance of training in Montreal or Ottawa and this month in Levis really did give us a very good start.

NARRATOR:

While the PPCLI re-embarked from Levis the First Division moved out of Valcartier and marched to their boarding point at Quebec.

A Manitoba Free Press Journalist who watched the big parade reported it this way --

"No one who witnessed the departure of the Canadian troops from Valcartier camp will ever forget the sight. The march was some 18 miles by road to Quebec, and it was mostly made in a drizzling rain, with exceedingly heavy going under foot. The various battalions at various hours of the day were summoned by the trumpeter and on the order to start the long khaki-coloured lines debouched into the road. As they passed the other battalion lines they were cheered by friends who lined the roadway, and who in many cases provided Bands to play the men from camp. The familiar tunes could be heard until the last man of the leaving battalion had disappeared from view-- foot-slogging-it through the heavy mud.

The greater part of the artillery made the march late in the afternoon and at night, arriving in Quebec rainsoaked, mud-bespattered, horses reeking in the rain, but everyone cheerful and content. Even in the drizzling downpour the sight of the long lines of guns, ammunition wagons, transports, and horses filing along the narrow roads, flanked by autumn-tinted trees, fringed by quaint French-Canadian villages and farmsteadings was an inspiring one. Women and children came to the doors to cheer them as they passed.

NARRATOR:(CONT)

point a white-haired old Curé of a French village stood for nearly half an hour to his knees in the wet grass of his orchard, plucking apples from the trees and throwing them to the men as they swung along.

The afternoon the transports sailed to meet their grim convoy at the rendezvous was clear and bright. The Dufferin Terrace overlooking the harbour was black with the thousands which watched them go. From the liners as they passed one by one slowly down the river and past Point Levis came the music of Bands, and the singing of the soldiers. Waving handkerchiefs and cheer answered them until the last of the big transports carrying the pride of Canada's soldiery disappeared from view between the Isle of Orleans and the mainland."

JACOBS, A.G.:
LSHG

We had twenty-two miles to go which included riding through the streets of Quebec, a whole regiment, six hundred of us. We met street cars on some of those narrow streets and we had six hundred-odd horses. But we arrived at the dockside.

ROSS, J.W.:
Arty. 4 Div.

Some of our men were on one boat and some of our horses on another. Some of our guns on one boat and some on another. We didn't know that we'd ever see them again. However, we joined the convoy and went out into the gulf.

DODDS, W.D.:
13th Btn.

Each boat lying waiting pulled into Quebec docks to load up and as they loaded up they sailed off down the St. Lawrence to a deserted part of the coast, Gaspé Bay. That's where they congregated after loading up at Quebec.

ANDERSON, T.V.:
Engineers

We got up in the morning after we got there. A fine day, it was quite a sight and here were thirty ships all anchored there ready to take off.

ROSS, J.W.:
Arty. 4 Div.

After waiting for possibly a day or so we were joined by the British Navy and the convoy started across the ocean. The largest convoy that, up to that time, had ever crossed the Atlantic.

RAE, A.S.:
16th Btn.

Just as the sun was setting the ships left Gaspé Bay in single order. But when they hit the sea they formed three rows. There were some thirty-three transports. And these ships were approximately a mile apart, the rows.

LEWIS, Victor:
4th Btn.

You had a superdreadnaught up in front and then there were dreadnaughts and the battleships and the gunboats and the destroyers. It formed a diamond-shape actually in movement.

LONGSTAFFE, C.E.:
15th Btn.

As far as you could see right over the horizon was these three straight lines of ships and it was a wonderful sight.

COX, F.C.:
R.C.D.

The two flank lines would send a ship out each day as a king of a scouting, you see. Royal George would go out on the right and we'd go out on the left. Then we'd come back in behind and come up and take our place in the line. We had no mistake in finding the place in the line because we were behind that very nice old lady, the Tunisian. It was the funniest looking ship I ever saw the way it used to wiggle. It was a comical looking thing.

ANDERSON, T.V.:
Engineers

The convoy had to more or less go the pace of the slowest boat and of course there was always one boat that lagged. Every morning she was away out of sight behind us somewhere and we had to slow up while she was brought up into line again. Then off we'd go again as fast as she could go.

NARRATOR:

And the troops of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment joined the convoy as it passed bound eastward.

FROST, Sidney:
Royal Nfld Rgt.

We were held up in the harbour here for one day. We were awaiting the convoy to reach a meeting point off Cape Race, and we joined them there on October the 5th.

ANDERSON, T.V.:
Engineers

Everything went very well indeed on the convoy. We had nice weather on the way over and the men were very happy. One of the very noticeable things was the way the men took all the discomforts. They took it remarkably well.

CHRISTOPHERSON, E.L.:
5th Btn.

We were put on a boat in Quebec. The old Lapland. It was just crawling with lice. We hadn't been on there more than a few hours before we were just as lousy as pet coons, the whole bunch of us, and we didn't know what the trouble was. I thought I had developed some skin disease.

TIMMIS, R.S.:
R.C.D.

The ships hadn't been cleaned at all. They had been brushed over with a white-wash brush. We had half the horses get ringworm. It took us months and months after landing at Salisbury Plain to get ringworm out of the regiment.

JACOBS, A.G.:
LSHG

They prevailed on me to say that I would be a waiter in the Officers Mess the night before we sailed. We got up next morning and laid the tables and after a while an Officer come in and I asked him what he wanted and he wanted porridge. I took a look at this porridge. The boat was going up and down and that was the end of that. My career as an Officer's Mess waiter aboard ship finished right there and I headed back to my troop.

TIMMIS, R.S.:
R.C.D.

Our veterinary officer, Col. Taschereau from Quebec, he was so sick the moment the ship started to move he said to me, "Timmie," he said, "you've got to take over the whole of the veterinary treatment of these six hundred horses because I'm going to be ill until we land in Britain, if we ever do."

JACOBS, A.G.:
LSHG

Oh I would struggle up on deck where they were teaching us how to draw swords. We ran around and we dashed for the rail, and we vomited over the side, and we fell back and we were most enthusiastic.

STEVENS, Lester:
8th Btn.

One of the sailors on the boat, he fell overboard. He was painting the ship. They threw the life belt out to him and he put his arms through it. Then he waved to us right out in the middle of the Atlantic, laughing like anything. They lowered a boat then they rowed him back to the boat behind us.

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L.:
5th Btn.

They set up a canteen on the boat and we used to buy our chocolate bars and apples and cigarettes and one thing and another until we discovered printed on them that they were donated as gifts to the first overseas contingent by these different chocolate companies. And then the boys, of course, went to town and wrecked the canteen and helped themselves. Oh, there were a lot of little things. There was a mutiny on board because they were serving up rotten fish. Somebody set fire to the boat on the way over. There was quite a cross section of people on the boat.

HAIG, R.F.:
Fort Garry Horse

The various supplies that they had were beginning to go a little tasty, shall I say. Anyway on this particular day we went down to the mess and kippers was on the menu for breakfast, and you could smell them before you got there. Major McMeans of Winnipeg was field officer of the day, and he came down to ask the usual questions. "Are there any complaints?" And he got on the right side of his face a kipper. The fellow was a good shot. He turned round, "Who threw that?" and wham on the other side he got another one. But he was a great sport, he never said a word. He turned right around and Col. Patterson told me afterwards what had happened. McMeans came to Col. Patterson's cabin. He knocked on the door and the Colonel said, "Come in," and he poked his head in the door and he said, "Colonel, can you smell me?" Colonel Patterson is alleged to have said, "My God, yes!" "Well," he said, "that is what the men are expected to eat."

CHAMBERS, J.I.:
7th Btn.

The thing that bothered us mostly going over was that every day we'd get messages that there was another half million Germans taken prisoner and we pleaded with the Captain to please speed it up a bit before they were all used up. We were sure the war would be finished before we got there.

RAE, A.S.:
16th Btn.

As we pulled in people had no idea who these ships were. Until some of our bands aboard the ship started to play the Maple Leaf and O Canada and then we got a great reception.

NARRATOR:

The convoy dropped anchor in the port of Plymouth. The old seafaring town that centuries earlier had cast the bread of colonization upon the waters of the Western Ocean now saw it return a thousandfold after so many many days.

DODD, W.D.:
13th Btn.

In no time hundreds upon hundreds of citizens were flocking down to the waterfront, climbing up walls, climbing the riggings of boats in the harbour, calling out welcome, cheering like mad, waving flags. Every point of vantage was occupied by someone. About thirty or forty young boys were running along to the pier-head

DODD, W.D.:(cont)
13th Btn.

with their band instruments and in no time at all they struck up a tune. The word passed from one to another. "That's Tipperary, the new war song." That was the first thing we heard in the matter of music - Tipperary.

HAIG, R.F.:
Ft.Garry Horse

We sat on those ships in Plymouth for ten days; we weren't allowed to go ashore. We were still short of food, so we cut large sheets of cardboard and we put on it - "We are very short of food, can you help us?" We threw these into the water, you see. So the following day small boats began to arrive, and they brought us the most beautiful food, Cornish pies, oh all kinds of things. So we didn't do too badly.

FISH, Fred.:
Arty. 4 Div.

The Colonel allowed a group to go ashore and they, of course, played up a bit and got drunk. I think I saved many of their lives because they were on a flat barge coming back and they were wrestling and might have fallen over and drowned themselves. And as they came back the Sergeant-Major locked them up.

JOHNSON, C.J.:
14th Btn.

We helped two or three of them get off one night. We were close to the dock and we had a gang of us, just came down a rope, and we covered up. They got clothes from the engineers and they hit up into the town. One fellow came back with a wrist watch as big as a plate, pretty near.

MILLS, Guy:
4th Btn.

One of the fellows on our boat, his parents were close by to Plymouth, and they used to come out every day in a rowboat and they would nestle at the foot of the gangplank and he would go down and get in the boat and, of course, they would have an hour together with all the troops looking over the side gazing down.

HAIG, R.F.:
Ft.Garry Horse

Before we finally got ashore we were asked to parade through Plymouth, and I was detailed to be a rear party. And one amusing thing I remember was that a dear old lady standing at the side of the road asked "Are you a Canadian?" I said, "Yes." She said, "Where are your feathers?"

MARLOW, H.A.:
LSHG

One young woman run up some steps to a public house door just as we was passing and she says, "Come on and see the Canadians comin'", and a woman come out and she says, "Oh blimey, they can speak English".

DODDS, W.P.:
13th Btn.

Everybody was pleased and excited at an invitation from a Peer who had his estate just outside Plymouth to take about a hundred of those who could be spared from duty to be entertained at his estate. Then the bulletin was issued to the various ships saying the authorities had selected the party on a fifty-fifty basis. That is fifty officers, fifty men. Well, that tore it. On the "Grampion" forty or fifty comrades all discontented and disgruntled rushed the boat deck. Choosing the largest life-boat they tore off the cover, knocked the chocks out, and whilst this life-boat was being lowered down to the water by jerks and jumps, sailors who had noticed what was going on reported the matter to the Bridge. Then began the most burlesque scene you ever saw in the rowing world. Imagine fifty soldiers, all of them amateurs, trying to get that boat away from the steamer's side. The "Grampion's" whistle was taken up and by this time police boats were coming from each end of the harbour, and when they saw this higgledy-piggledy bunch in the boat, these citizens from Plymouth rushed down into the water. They lifted them bodily out of the boat and spirited them away. Then the police boats arrived one after the other and it's to their sporting credit that there was a grin on every face that they didn't get their prey. They gave them a bed for the night, they fed them. They were juggled by the police, some of them, but most of them surrendered after they had a good time. And the last man to be roped in was got in time to march off with his unit to Salisbury Plains in three days time.

NARRATOR:

Salisbury Plain - it not only rhymes with rain but in the collective mind of the First Canadian Division Salisbury became synonymous with rain.

MARLOW, H.A.:
LSHG

The day we got down there it was a nice sunshiny day in October and the next day we woke up and it was raining and it rained every day right up to Christmas.

COSGRAVE, L.M.:
LSHG

That was known as the year of the great rains.

TIMMIS, R.S.:
R.C.D.

It rained every day except twice and then it snowed.

LEWIS, Victor:
4th Btn.

It rained and rained and rained, not just for an hour or two hours, but by the week. It got so bad that the tent pegs wouldn't stay in. They told us that the tents that were erected there were old South African war tents. And I can quite believe it, because you could lay in that tent and look right through it at the stars, when the stars were shining.

JOHNSON, C.J.:
14th Btn.

We slept on the ground first.

HOSSICK, K.C.:
13th Btn.

We simply went to sleep with our blankets on top of a rubber sheet and we climbed out of the hole in the morning that our bodies had made. I'm sure if we had slept for 48 hours we'd have been in a complete cave-in. It was terrible.

McLAUGHLIN, R.:
14th Btn.

The big trouble there is that this part of the world seems to be practically all chalk. So there's not a great deal of earth to soak up this stuff. And we had to dig moats around our tents. And then we'd dig a little trench running from it out into the street of the camp and put a drain down the middle so it would all run out into this common drain.

LEWIS, Victor:
4th Btn.

You had a ground sheet and two blankets. Take the blankets, wring them out, hang them on the line and let the rain wash the mud out of them and when you came in at night you would wring them out again, lay the ground sheets down and you'd all buddy around with the blankets.

SINCLAIR, Ian:
13th Btn.

Why anybody ever survived that winter on the plains, I don't know. Mud everywhere, rain all the time.

ANDERSON, T.V.:
R.C.E.

I have a photograph of Salisbury Cathedral flooded completely and you can't tell which is the upright position and which is the reflection. The water was right over the floor of the Cathedral, you know.

HAIG, R.D.:
Ft. Garry Horse

In my ignorance, being a patriotic Englishman, I had told my Canadian friends in the regiment that once we got to Salisbury Plain under the British Army control everything would be wonderful. Did I get razzed after that. It was the filthiest dirtiest hole that men were ever expected

HAIG, R.D.: (cont)

to live in. And we soon learned that there was only one way to be reasonably comfortable. That was never take your clothes off, because it was much easier to get up in the morning damp wet than get up in the morning and try to put on cold damp clothes. So we kept our clothes on.

STEVENS, Lester:
8th Btn.

I never had my feet dry the whole four months, and I used to empty the water out of my boots every night. I used to wring my socks out and lay on them to dry them to put them on in the morning.

LEWIS, Victor:
4th Btn.

It seems incredible. Some of the boys would get down to the Y.M.C.A. and sleep on the table, but of course that wouldn't accommodate too many, and the guy that could fight the best or looked the toughest, he got the table. The Provost section, they put floor boards in the guard tents so all the old-time soldiers would get under the influence to get stuck into the guard house so they would be on dry boards, but eventually they gave us all boards.

JOHNSON, C.J.:
14th Btn.

I don't know which was the worst, tent boards or the ground.

HAIG, R.D.:
Ft. Garry Horse

In the tent that I was in we had four floor tent floors. And we put one on top of the other, and they were sinking down when we left. That's how muddy it was.

LONGSTAFFE, C.E.:
15th Btn.

Eventually we got hold of an oil stove, and by and by nearly all the tents had an oil stove.

MILLS, Guy:
4th Btn.

When we woke up in the morning we would draw some water, put it in the wash basin and put it on the stove and we'd have warm water. Well that water used to go right round the tent and everybody shaved and washed in the same water, but that was the only luxury we had that I can speak of.

LEWIS, Victor:
4th Btn.

But we didn't suffer too much. As far as the meals were concerned you certainly had to hand a medal to the old cooks. We had dixie pots. They'd hold five gallons. For breakfast you had tea and if you were lucky, porridge. For lunch you would have stew. Now all dixies are in use at each meal. But to wash them out you had cold water and of course if a little porridge got into the

LEWIS, Victor: (cont) stew, who knew it. It could be beef, it could be lamb. When they made a dixie of tea they would make it extra strong, skim the grease off them from our stew, and got that you liked that tea. I went to a restaurant in London when I had a leave and I thought there was something wrong with their tea. There was no wood ash in it from the fire and there was no grease in it from the mulligan stew.

MILLS, Guy:
4th Btn.

Very often the mess orderlies used to gather the dixies and run them right over to the slop pail and ditch them in there and the boys would go to the canteen and buy their dinner at the canteen because they didn't want to eat what they had.

MASON, D.H.C.:
3rd Btn.

You hear it described in such a way that you would infer that the troops were going around with their tails between their legs but they never lost their sense of humour. They always understood war was hell and this was hell and most of them, I think, regarded the people who came over and got into luxurious huts as sissies.

JOHNSON, C.J.:
14th Btn.

We were a pretty lively bunch and we made the best of everything and didn't do too much growling about it.

MACDONNELL, J.M.:
Arty. 4 Div.

Years and years afterwards one of our battery members got into trouble in Toronto and had, unfortunately, to spend a week-end in the Don Jail. When he met his lawyer Monday morning in the Police Court and the lawyer said, "Well, how did you get on?" His answer was, "Mac, compared to Salisbury Plain the place was a bloody hotel".

PRICE, C.B.:
14th Btn.

That was one of the toughest spots in the whole war from a physical point of view. The fellows who survived that didn't run any danger of real illness when they got to the trenches at all.

TIMMIS, R.S.:
R.C.D.

By Christmas the British public said this has got to stop. And it did. We were all put into billets just after Christmas. In farms, everything, all around the country. They weren't going to have the Canadians starved to death on that awful Salisbury Plain.

NARRATOR:

As the Times of London put it

"If it was the intention of the military authorities to put the Canadians through a severe physical test before sending them to the front, they certainly succeeded. Tent life in the winter days was hard without doubt, but it was soon found that it was exceedingly healthy. A small number broke down under the strain but the others became hardened. It would be difficult to find a body of men more fit physically than the Canadians at the end of their first two months on Salisbury Plain".

JACOBS, A.G.:
LSHG

We were moved into the villages and billeted on the villagers and they talked very broad Wiltshire language. When we moved in this ex-Cockney soldier, he went to talk to this lady and after a while he said, "Jake, you understand this lingo here. Come out and talk to this lady." Well, he was a Cockney Canadian and she was a broad Wiltshire, and after a while she said, "Be you Wiltshire", and I, in the dialect said, "Sure I be Wiltshire." "Where do 'ee come from?" "I come from Netherham." "And what be your name?" "Jacobs". "Well, you weren't one of Jim Jacobs' boys, he what went to Canada?" I said, "Yes." "Well," she said, "George," that's her husband who was seventy-two then, "George worked for your grandfather when your father were that high." And this old boy had herded sheep for my grandfather when my father was a boy. Our Major told us afterward that when he went down to arrange for these billets the people were hostile. However, before we left that village they couldn't say or do enough for us, and kept friendly with us right up till I went back in 1936.

MASON, D.H.C.:
3rd Btn.

After Christmas two of the Brigades moved into huts.

LEWIS, Victor:
4th Btn.

We were building those huts from the first part of November through December.

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L.:
5th Btn.

They finally called for volunteers, anybody that knew anything about building. So I volunteered for that. I had worked in a bank. Talk about the rag-tag and bob-tail. Every unit, when they saw a chance to get rid of their troublesome soldiers, they shipped them off there. We had an awful bunch and we used to have about half them up for orderly room every morning. I don't know what they did with all the fines they levied.

PRICE, C.B.:
14th Btn.

We moved into huts at a spot called Lark Hill and from then on we were comparatively comfortable. We were at least dry at night and that sort of thing.

NARRATOR:

If it was a bad time for the Canadians it was certainly no picnic for the people of Wiltshire. We can believe they put up with a lot, but patience ran out when some ancient Druidical rites were interfered with.

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L.:
5th Btn.

Lark Hill is right beside the Stonehenge. And the day came when the sun was supposed to shine on a certain spot in this Stonehenge. The sun just comes over Lark Hill and hits that one spot once a year, and the rest of the year it never shines on that spot and a lot of people showed up, most of them quite old, and the sun come up but it didn't shine on the spot because a row of our huts was in the road. There was hell to pay about that. As a matter of fact, we had to tear down the row of huts

HAIG, R.F.:
Ft. Garry Horse

If anybody knows anything about chalk knows that if you put water with it it makes the most slimiest messiest thing you ever saw. Well a certain officer, who shall be nameless, conceived the idea that it would be wonderful to have nice white paths running up and down through our camp. So we dug down through the top soil and we made these beautiful white paths. And, of course, they became skating rinks, you couldn't stand up

NARRATOR:

How did the health of the Division stand up to all this wet and exposure?

MORRISEY, T.S.:
13th Btn.

But the funny thing was that we got into the huts and the sick rate went up by three and four times. In other words, if we were in a constant state of being wet and cold it didn't affect our health, but when we got into these huts and you sat in front of a hot stove and then went out on parade, you chilled.

LEACH, R.J.:
Arty Corps.

As soon as they put the infantry into huts they all went down, meningitis, and colds and pneumonia, and everything

MASON, D.H.C.:
3rd Btn.

Good old General Mercer who was distinctively an out-of-doors man of the first order said the First Brigade will stay under canvas, and we had the healthiest Brigade in the Division.

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L.:
5th Btn.

Spinal meningitis was going pretty good guns, so they had a general medical examination, a big parade, and swabbed everybody's throat. It was quite contagious, you know. I came back from the village one day to be told to get my things together, I was going over to the hospital - that I was a carrier. And there were about thirty or forty of us over there. We were all fairly husky and were able to carry the germs around without catching it. While we were in quarantine there we were right beside the hospital. Occasionally some fellow would get sick and they'd take him and put him in the hospital. They didn't have proper treatment in those days. You'd hear him screaming with pain in there. Then in the morning there'd be a bundle in a blanket put through this hole where our food came and we'd have to bury it. So that was a kind of a grim experience.

FISH, Fred:
Arty. 4 Div.

Men got spinal meningitis and the horses had thrush. They weren't used to the climate. The Canadian horses we brought over, they were first-class. It was pretty tragic to see them shot for thrush.

ROSS, J.W.:
Arty. 4 Div.

The horses were standing in mud for months on end. They developed scratches and mud fever and cracked heels. They were useless.

JACOBS, A.G.:
LSHG

The mud was so bad that we moved the horse lines twice a day. There would be forty horses on a line and each horse had a peg and a piece of rope and he was tied to that in the mud. The tie ropes were in the ground, not up on posts. Nobody knew enough to put them up on posts. We grappled in six inches of slush and pulled these pegs out. In the morning so many men would lead the horses off. Then we drove the pegs back in, then the horses came on to a new piece of grass. Then in the evening we did that again. And we finally had a sea of mud a mile across with the squadrons out on the sides. Oh, it was terrible.

MILLS, Guy:
4th Btn.

Of course finally we got some leave and that was pretty nice to be able to get up to London and go to some shows. I remember I went to one show called "Peg Of My Heart", and it was simply like being in fairyland to me after the kind of life we'd been leading.

NARRATOR:

But leave was scarce, and sometimes disappointing.

PALIN, F.:
14th Btn.

I had a few quid to spend so they gave me a seven days pass. So I go to London and I hook up with two Spanish sisters. We got to the park and I'm hanging around the park with these two girls and I hear Bands playing and saw these troops marching up with these flags flying. It was what they call the Changing of the Guard in St. James' Palace. So I'm very close to the parade going by and I didn't stand to attention, so the Sergeant Major left the parade and he says, "Follow me and get your knees up." So I get into St. James' Palace and I walk into the Guard House. And I'm there eight hours. Around four in the afternoon I walked an Officer with a book. He says, "Stand up". So he started reading of to me, KR and O, I didn't know what the hell he was talking about. He says, "How long have you been in the army?" I says "Four months." He says, "Get out of here". And when I returned to Salisbury Plains and told all the old ex-Imperial NCO's and soldiers, they got quite a kick out of it. I thought I was going to be shot. The most tragic part of the whole thing was I lost the two Spanish girls.

NARRATOR:

After Valcartier and the nearer nightmare of Salisbury Plain what sort of soldiers were they getting to be? Not much like regular army and they really never would be. But they had a great determination from the beginning and now were acquiring an awesome toughness to go with it.

FISHER A.H.:
8th Btn.

A fellow once said to me, "There is no discipline in the Canadian Army." I said "There's no servile obedience, but," I said, "our discipline is one hundred per cent.

FISHER, A.H.:(cont) And I tell you why," I said, "I think the First Canadian Division was the finest Division of soldiers that was ever gathered together. Most of the fellows were brought up in good homes. They didn't need any Sergeant to tell them how to conduct themselves. In fact, some of the men in the ranks were better gentlemen than some of the Officers. I never made a good soldier but I went to do a job, and I was like thousands of more who never made good soldiers, but they did a good job".

MILLS, Guy:
4th Btn.

Very often it was the ones that you thought least of that turned out to be the best. I know we had one old chap, he'd fought in the British Army at Tell el Kebir and that was in 1880 something. He must have been over sixty. And of course they scoffed at him and said, "That old B won't last long." But he got to France. He got wounded in the cheek of his backside at the second Battle of Ypres and he was so chagrined that he refused to go to the hospital, and he became regimental Sergeant-Major and he stayed with us until after the Somme in 1916. He was really something like the father to the whole unit.

McARTHUR, J.H.:
7th Btn.

We were on review, being reviewed by their Majesties the King and Queen Mary, and as the Queen went past me she came back and she says, "Young man, how old are you?" Well I was sort of taken back so I says, "Nineteen, Your Majesty". And she just shook her head and she said, "You naughty boy".

MASON, D.H.C.:
3rd Btn.

The time on Salisbury Plains was very tedious. The general feeling was for heaven's sake let's get over to France and get into this thing. And there were no illusions at that stage as to whether it was going to be a picnic or not. I mean, we all knew what sort of casualties the B.E.F. had had.

HETHERINGTON, H.G.:
PPCLI

We were very very green and very naive and I don't think we wondered much what was going to happen except we were a long time getting into it.

NICHOLSON, N.:
14th Btn.

I remember distinctly one English fellow asking me what I would do if I found the Germans were shooting at me. And that was an idea that never occurred to me before. Well I thought the best thing I could do was to shoot back. And he said, "Ah, great stuff, lad."

LEWIS, Victor:
4th Btn.

We weren't going out to fight. To go to fight you have to feel angry. You go out to do a job, let's put it that way. It happens that the job is to kill another man but you don't realize it as such. You're being trained to do a job but it hasn't been instilled in you you're going out to kill. It's a term you don't seem to use.

MASON, D.H.C.:
3rd Btn.

We were fearfully keen to get first-hand knowledge on what things were like, naturally you're - just as when you are going to die you are anxious to know what the next world is like. It was almost as hard to find out.

JACOBS, A.G.:
LSHG

I know now that we never did train. I didn't know then. We rode around. We knew how to form patrols. We were taught how to charge a battery but we never had any detailed training.

COX, F.C.:
R.C.D.

All we could do was exercise. We'd take our horses out in the morning, exercise and we'd take them out again in the afternoon and exercise and when we came in at evening stables we'd pull their ears for an hour. Pulling the horse's ears, you know, causes the circulation and they like it, it warms them up.

SINCLAIR, Ian:
13th Btn.

We started off with platoon training and gradually worked to company training, battalion training, brigade and then the whole Division did certain exercises towards the end.

NARRATOR:

As the rains of November became the rains of December the Royal Newfoundland Regiment were given a reprieve from the mud of Salisbury Plain and moved out for higher ground.

FROST, Sidney:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

We thought possibly that we wouldn't have a full battalion and maybe we would be split up among the Canadians and diverted here and there and naturally we didn't like that.

- 1 MAMA ROTHSCHILD: My boys won't let them.
- 2 MUSIC: PUNCTUATE: THEME: INTO
- 3 SOUND: STEAMER'S SIREN FADES UP BIG AND SLOW: CUTS
- 4 NARRATOR: There had been a kind of warning two years earlier, in that April midnight off Cape Race, when the soft, shuddering jar ran up the dozen decks and through the salons and ballrooms and swimming pools of the unsinkable TITANIC -
- 5 CAST: SLIGHT, SHIFTING MURMUR OF LARGE, WELL-MANNERED CROWD ON DECK: MEN AND WOMEN: ONLY CURIOUS, NOT ALARMED: ONE OR TWO LIGHT LAUGHS
- 6 NARRATOR: She lay steady on the water in the clear, crisp night, with the white-capped peak of the berg already drawing off. Not a mark, not a bruise showing - only a shower of ice fragments glistening on the scrubbed white planks of the boat deck. Some of the passengers were already picking them up - for souvenirs.
- 7 DIRECTOR: (MOVING THROUGH CROWD: BRUSQUE, SOOTHING CONFIDENCE) Nothing to worry about, ladies and gentlemen - nothing to worry about - we seem to have brushed an iceberg. This ship can't sink.
- 8 NARRATOR: An awkward incident for a maiden voyage - nothing more. The Managing Director of the White Star Line moved among the watchers, solid and assured. Solid as money could make him, safe as science; the tip of his good cigar glowed like a vestry lamp. Bankers and statesmen, writers and railway presidents, scientists, philosophers, teachers - a generous cross-section of the wealth and wit, the wisdom and power, the top safe half of the world. This world which had now outgrown the corsets of Victoria, flowered in the lush magnificence of Edward, and still was moving on. There was masterful sureness in the very air, casual, perfumed and cigar-smoking security, guarded by the skills and crafts of all the ages. Progress and confidence - they stood at their peak and climax in this mighty hull towering in the moonlight off Cape Race, shining new - and stopped.
- 9 SOUND: ENGINES BEGIN TO THROB BELOW
- 10 CAST: LITTLE, AMUSED BREATH OF RELIEF
- 11 WOMAN: (OUT OF IT: PLAYFUL DISAPPOINTMENT) Oh - we're started again. And I was hoping for an adventure -

ANNOUNCER:

The first-person accounts of World War I were researched, arranged and edited under the direction of Frank Lalor.

The series, originated by A. E. Powley, is written narrated and produced by J. Frank Willis.

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen: Continuing "FLANDERS' FIELDS" the Chronicle of Canada's Expeditionary Force in the Great War, the CBC presents today Chapter Four, "Baptism of Fire".

NARRATOR: The Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, largely composed of Old Soldiers who had seen service in War, were a jump ahead of the rest of the First Division in their training and a long jump indeed in experience and readiness for action. As a result the battalion had moved out of the quagmire of Salisbury Plain 16th November 1914, to join the British 80th Brigade at Winchester. Now, on December 20, they were ready to embark at Southampton for Le Havre and their first Christmas in France.

Herewith, in more detail, the men who made that journey to the battle tell their own story.

HETHERINGTON, H.G.:

PPCLI

After we'd been inspected by the King and Queen, it was suddenly decided that we were far enough advanced to get overseas before the Canadian contingent as a whole and so we moved off to Mornhill Camp at Winchester where we joined up with the 80th Brigade in the 27th Division.

O'CONNELL, H.F.:

PPCLI

The 27th Infantry Division had just come back from China, India and Africa. So we were very very glad to join them as most of our chaps had been ex-service men. And they were one of the last regular divisions of the British Army to go out to France.

HANCOX, Geo. T.:

PPCLI

Shortly before Christmas, 1914, we marched by road from Winchester to Southampton and embarked for France.

HETHERINGTON, H.G.:
PPCLI

We embarked on the Cardiganshire which sailed about seven o'clock in the evening and the next morning we'd arrived at La Havre and there we disembarked, and went into a rest camp. The day after that we went back to La Havre and got on a train.

HANCOX, Geo. T.:
PPCLI

Forty men loaded into one small box car. We must have been twenty-four hours. We disembarked at Arc, and we went to a place called Blarringham where we spent about ten days including our first Christmas in France.

SCOTT, Louis:
PPCLI

We went into the front line trenches on the night of the 4th of January, 1915, relieving the French.

YOUNG, F.G.:
PPCLI

The order came: Fall in, fall in everywhere. So we fell in and our company officer told us that we were going in tonight. And so we started through the ruined old village of St. Eloi. And we went down a slope, across a marshy meadow and in these marshy meadows we had dug the trenches.

HETHERINGTON, H.G.:
PPCLI

It was an extraordinary thing for a regiment in the first tour in the line to go into totally unknown conditions and relieve the French, for we didn't speak the language. Not only that but the French didn't even wait for us to relieve them, they just moved back and gave us a slight idea where we were to go forward to.

O'CONNELL, H.F.:
PPCLI

We had great difficulty in going into the line. For one thing there were no communication trenches: There were rows of old trenches which were ankle deep or knee deep in water, and eventually we found the place where we were ordered to stay.

HETHERINGTON, H.G.:
PPCLI

We went in in pitch darkness and just found the first thing that looked like a trench and settled down to it.

SCOTT, Louis:
PPCLI

We put in about five times as many men as they had. There was hardly any room to move. They were crowding over on each other, and it was extremely unpleasant. We had just ordinary shoes on and the mud was up to our knees. There was no barbed wire in front of us and of course we had no braziers.

O'CONNELL, H.F.:

PPCLI

There was a wood in front of us which was his front line, and all their drainage and everything drained down to us and all the trenches were waterlogged. And I remember that on our left there were about 110 dead Frenchmen lying out with their old pre-war uniforms, blue tail coats, red breeches, and everything. They had all been killed in an attack which took place in December.

SCOTT, Louis:

PPCLI

The first night we were under fire of course, we were curious to see what the Germans were doing. although we warned all ranks to keep their heads down. I first knew how serious it was when I heard a private named McNeash say to his chum McNeil, "Look at the bastards, they're bailing out too." And just at that time a rifle shot came and when I got to where they were, McNeash had been shot through the mouth and the front of McNeill's face was taken right off. Our first casualties within an hour.

O'CONNELL, H.F.:

PPCLI

The next morning they started shelling us and two Lance Corporals were killed. The next night Captain Newton was wounded and died the next morning. That was our baptism.

SCOTT, Louis:

PPCLI

It was known as International Trench because it had been fought over so much by the Germans and the French and, of course, the British, and then we came in as a Canadian unit. The parapet in this International Trench was only one sandbag thick and of course bullets from the enemy would penetrate it. You were constantly under the supervision of the Germans who were only fifteen yards away. And as soon as you put yourself up to put a sandbag up you were shot at immediately and they shot it down again. It was cut off from all communication, both from front and rear. You always moved by night, you never moved by day. You had to carry all your supplies in on your shoulders, and many men were killed before they ever got into the trench.

YOUNG, F.G.:

PPCLI

We went through all sorts and kinds of things after that first winter of the war, but I think that those of us who went out there around Christmas '14 and went into those trenches at St. Eloi, we dropped into about the worst trenches there were.

CANDY, Sergeant:
PPCLI

There was nothing but mud, mud, mud, and water and corruption. Blood everywhere, mud everywhere, dead men everywhere. It couldn't be handled.

NARRATOR:

Back in England meanwhile, the first Canadian Contingent had come under the command of Lieutenant-General E. H. Alderson and by the 2nd of February 1915, he was reporting his command ready for action. On that date advance and billeting parties left for France. Two days later King George the Fifth and Lord Kitchener reviewed the Division and on the 7th of February, in a downpour of rain, the first units boarded the troop-trains for Avonmouth on the Bristol Channel.

COPPING, E.N.:
5th Btn.

Rumours went around that we were going to Egypt. At that time the world was full of rumours, or England was anyway. The Russians had come through England. People had seen snow off their boots. Well anyway, in spite of rumours, we were taken to Avonmouth, near Bristol, and we sailed from there to St. Nazaire in the top end of the Bay of Biscay.

NARRATOR:

Some measure of the burning desire to get into action is found in Private Christopherson's story. You may remember last week he had been sent to the isolation tents as a meningitis carrier.

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L.:
5th Btn.

The four of us in our tent were going to escape. We couldn't find out anything. We didn't know whether the unit was still in England or whether it had gone to France, or when it was going. We couldn't find out anything. And a 5th Battalion man by the name of Ferguson, he was a civil engineer, drew the plans for

(CONT)

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L.:

(CONT)

a tunnel , and the tunnel was to start in my tent. Our field was right beside a sunken road, and there were bushes growing on the side of this and the tent I was in was not too far from the road. We had to work at night with our knives and forks, we had no tools, and carry the stuff in our mess tins, and we put it under the boards of the other tents. By the time we had the tunnel dug everybody's floor was up by about a foot and a half. Anyhow the tunnel was finished. It was a pretty good one. It came right out in the roots of some brush on the side of this road, and we used to take turns in going through the tunnel and going down to the village and we found out through talking to different soldiers when the Battalions were leaving. And when it actually came to pulling out of this camp and joining the Battalions we got out and got into a bush, and as our different units went past we just slipped in and marched along with them and got right on the boat. We got in amongst a bunch of bales of hay and hid and we waited there and pretty soon we heard a search party and they found us and put us in jail. Took us off the boat and put us in jail. And they had a bunch of old British regulars, reservists, guarding us, and this chap Ferguson was loaded financially. He had lots of money, so he was our angel of course. He bribed them all and they went and got us a bottle of Johnny Walker each, and they had plenty themselves, and by morning they were all for us. So they volunteered to escort us back to Devizes and they backed one of these big London buses up you know, and they put us into this bus and put an armed guard at the door and away we went. About two hundred yards down the road the guards put down their rifles and we all decided that we'd stop at the first pub we came to. And we stopped at every pub between Bath and Devizes. The only man we wouldn't buy a drink for was the driver. And these old fellows got so plastered by the time we got to Devizes we had to put on the guards' equipment and rifles. Ferguson acted as sergeant. He reported all present and correct, and they had to wait till the morning for the fellows to sober up and hand us over officially. We sent word in that we were going to leave again if they didn't release us, so they gave us a medical examination and gave us all clear and I went and joined my battalion over in France, about two weeks late.

SCRIVEN, C.:
10th Btn.

We went over on an old ferry boat off the Clyde. The capacity of the boat was somewhere around four hundred and thirty passengers. That's all they were allowed to carry, but they packed on eleven hundred and eight of our own unit plus a small unit of Army Service Corps men

McLAUGHLIN, R.:
14th Btn.

It took us about five days to get across. This was an old tub that had been taken from the Germans. It was called the Osterland, and it pretty well rolled its way over there.

NARRATOR:

Five days afloat, under the worst possible conditions, to accomplish a passage that had taken the "Pats" an afternoon. But, there was a reason. It had become known to British Intelligence that a concentration of German Submarines lay off Le Havre preparing a special effort to torpedo the transports. Thus the flotilla stood well to sea from the Bristol Channel and sailed a great half-circle into the Bay of Biscay. All might have gone well enough but for the weather.

LONGSTAFFE, C.E.:
15th Btn.

We got out from the Bristol Channel and we went into a hurricane. The whole darn regiment was down below in the hold.

PRICE, C.B.:
14th Btn.

The weather was appalling. We had to have a submarine guard on deck, and everybody down in the hold. They were so sick that you had to search to find enough men to form that submarine guard.

SEAMAN, E.:
3rd Btn.

The stern of the boat was going up and down, and I'm watching the waves to see if I can see a periscope bob up, but all I can see is the roast pork that we had had for dinner. I was no use as sharp shooting corporal until the time we got on dry land.

LONGSTAFFE, C.E.:
15th Btn.

There was two or three of us supposed to be watching for submarines so I said to these two guys, "Don't bother, we won't find any submarines in water like this.

ROSS, J.W.:
4 Div. Arty.

I'll never forget that crossing. We were told we'd only be a few hours going across and they put the horses up in the steel foredeck and we were told to leave the

(CONT)

ROSS, J.W.: (cont)

harness on. The waves were so terrific that they came right over and knocked the horses down on the steel deck and I went round trying to raise them up with the help of some of the men from the 16th Battalion. And when they were too exhausted we'd just shoot them and throw them overboard. One came over midships and was carried right down into the hold. And the men were sitting down there having a bite to eat when this horse came down, hit the ramp on the way down and spun down head over heels amongst the men sitting there.

McLAUGHLIN, R.:
14th Btn.

A lot of these fellows had gone around this open hatchway to enjoy the fresher air. All I heard was a terrific yell and there was the darndest scramble, hands and knees, running, those that could get up in time and down came this big draft horse.

LONGSTAFFE, C.E.:
15th Btn.

I was talking to one of the seamen. He said to me, he said, "When we get up on top of one of the next waves, you look over there and see what you can see." So I looked over there as we got up to the top and I could see another big boat, so I said, "What's that?" He said, "That's a French cruiser standing by." I said, "What do you mean standing by?" He said, "Well, they've already sent out the SOS". "Oh," I said, "that's nice to know," He said, "Well down below some of the guns are getting loose and they're pounding a hole in the side." I said, "Well, that's handy to know that, isn't it?"

WALTERS, T.:
8th Btn.

Going through from Bristol to St. Nazaire, being with the transport, of course, they segregated us fellows. We smelt too bad. And we had one big fellow, Jerry Pritchard, and I was sitting waiting and Jerry came along and he said, "What is in these boxes?" "Oh," I said, "I don't know." So he kicked one open. There was a gallon of rum in each end. So Jerry decided it was a good time to dish it out. He was a nephew of Louis Riel. That should be a historical mark.

SCRIVEN, C.:
10th Btn.

When we arrived up in a place called Hazebrouck we were appraised of the fact that the Battalion had been assessed a fine of nine hundred francs to pay for the rum that had been stolen off this boat and, of course, we never saw any of the rum. That was the biggest joke of the lot.

LONGSTAFFE, C.E.:
15th Btn.

When we got to St. Nazaire as the fellows came up out of the hold to go ashore they looked green, absolutely green, and their uniforms was one terrible mess.

JOHNSON, C.J.:
14th Btn.

We were put on a train after an hour or two. The old freight cars they had there in France, forty men and eight chevals, or eight horses. Pretty uncomfortable trip. There were about forty of us in there. You couldn't lie down in any comfortable position that somebody wasn't lying over your legs or something like that.

McLAUGHLIN, R.:
14th Btn.

If you laid down first you'd just be the bottom of a pile and by the time that you managed to struggle out in the morning you were short a pair of puttees at least. They were laying underneath all the other fellows.

SINCLAIR, Ian:
13th Btn.

Hazebrouck, where we detrained, was quite a long way behind the line. We could just barely hear the gunfire back there and the billets were in a long series of cottages along the road. It wasn't a real village, just farm houses and being put in with these French peasantry, all trying to experiment with their French and so forth. It was very intriguing and their boys had gone to the front, the same as we were and they put themselves out to make us comfortable.

NARRATOR:

From Hazebrouck to the assembly area seemed as long as the way to Tipperary. If the French peasantry along the march were disappointed that the Canadians failed to live up to their advance notices in the Paris papers whose correspondents had written such colorful pieces about Red Indians and Trappers and Frontiersmen they hid it well. Their cheers had the ring of sincerity.

Some men of the First Division say their feet still ache just thinking about that march. Standing in water on the Salisbury Plain for four months and a bit had done nothing to toughen them up.

MASON, D.H.C.:
3rd Btn.

Our first march was historic. We were green troops and we did it about the same they'd run a church parade. Once an hour the Brigade would halt and the Battalion behind would then halt, and then the next one would begin to halt and then the next one, and so on. Well, the net result of all that is that the last half of the column never gets any halts at all. So there was no time for men to sit down or anything of that kind. It was the most exhausting thing you could do. The result was that the Brigade arrived, after not too severe a march, exhausted, all in completely, and then we had a chance to observe some regular troops doing twice the distance and coming in fresh and whistling. We realized that something had to be learned.

ARNOLD, F.C.:
7th Btn.

To see the road behind us was really spectacular. There was about five hundred or six hundred fell out on the march because their feet was so soft. Well, I've seen fellows there with blisters right from their toes to their heel.

ODLUM, V.W.:
1 Div.

When we went in it was dirty and wet and cold and there was nothing comfortable or delightful or exciting about it but there was a tenseness in the air and we knew that there were things ahead which we couldn't picture but we knew that we were not going to like them.

EYLES, George:
15th Btn.

The roads narrow down to paths as you get closer to the line, and then from paths maybe to communication trenches. Any warnings of anything in front such as obstructions it had to be passed back from man to man, to beware of overhead wires or beware of a hole in the duckboard or something like that you know.

MASON, D.H.C.:
3rd Btn.

I think the first night the Company Commanders went up and spent the night in the line, and learned all they could from the Company Commanders they were in with you see. And then the next night two platoons from each Company went up and were attached to the Imperial Companies. I spent the night with them and the men absorbed a lot of wisdom of one kind or another, how posts were manned and that sort of thing, and how the rations were handled. To us it was all a terrifically exciting adventure.

MORRISEY, T.S.:
13th Btn.

I have a very vivid memory of the first night I went into the trenches. My Company was sent up to have four days training with a British battalion, and we were met by a guide. It was raining and we were going through this mud field and he said, "Now, when I say fall, fall and don't hesitate about it." We heard the machine guns rattling and didn't know whether they were coming near us or not, and all of us were scared, and suddenly we heard a rat-tat-tat and then he said "Fall" and we fell right bang in the mud, and when we got up it was pretty terrible. At the end of that trip I said to this little Cockney Corporal, "This is pretty harrowing. How often do you do this?" "Oh," he says, "I'm a runner. I do it two or three times a night." I said, "Doesn't it get on your nerves?" "No, sir. You know my philosophy in life is if you get it in the head you never know anything about it. If you get it in the arm or the leg you get three months home in Blighty, and if you don't get it at all you got to come up and do the blinking thing again tomorrow night."

ARNOLD, F.C.:
7th Btn.

It was a bright moonlight night and I could see the Germans working by their wire and I wanted to shoot. I got my rifle and I was going to shoot and this Hampshire fellow he grabbed my arm. "Don't shoot," he said. I said, "What's wrong?" "Oh," he says, "if you shoot they'll shoot and we got a working party out too." Well, I thought, this is a devil of a war. Come six thousand miles to shoot Germans and the first one I had a look at I couldn't shoot them.

MACKIE, J.O.:
7th Btn.

The word came along that the next morning we were to crowd out to the right and leave the part we were in vacant. So sure enough next morning at eleven o'clock we all crowded to the right and we were jammed in like sardines, and left all this part of this trench empty, and then our fellows started to shell the German trenches and the Germans came back and they were firing right at this trench that we'd vacated and you could see the bags going up in the air and everything else. And this was our first experience of trench warfare.

LEWIS, Victor:
4th Btn.

The first time we were under shellfire we were marching through a village and it just sounded as if there was a few carts going past, the rattle of the wheels over the cobbles and, never having been subjected to artillery fire, we didn't realize that it was the German shells coming over. We were going in but there was a

(CONT)

LEWIS, Victor:(cont)

British unit coming out, and as soon as they heard this rattle they all hit the ditch. We didn't, pure ignorance, but those Englishmen sure had a great respect for us. They thought we were brave. "Blimey, look at them damn fools, they took no notice of that shell." We weren't any braver than them. After we'd been under shellfire we'd hit the ditches as quick as anybody.

FISHER, A.H.:
8th Btn.

They sent us in with a British rifle brigade and we intermingled with every one of those fellows. Well night time came and there were two fellows from the rifle brigade and I was picked from the unit to go out on this advance post, and this outpost was sixty yards in front of the trench. There was a bell in the trench and there was a piece of rope on the bell. And we took this rope out, and if Fritzies came we had to pull the rope and ring the bell back in the trench. Well, the two fellows in the rifle brigade that I went out with, a couple of little London Cockneys, they were asking what kind of place Canada was like to live in and I told them what it was like living out West in those days, and they were much more interested in emigrating to Canada when the war was over than in pulling in that bloody rope. They had no fear whatever

LONGSTAFFE, C.E.:
15th Btn.

We went in with the Nots and Derbies. A fellow comes down the trench and yelling out, "Where is them Canucks?" So Bill Fraser and I, this fellow said to us, "There's our Colonel," he said, "and that's our Sergeant-Major in front of us." I said, "Well, who are you?" He said, "I'm a scout." I said, "Well, what have we got to do?" He says, "We've got to go and follow them." Well this Colonel and the Sergeant-Major, they just walked through the barbed wire there with walking sticks, talking to one another, and we was following them. And every now and again - Whee! And of course we was ducking, see, but this Colonel and the other two, they were just walking as if they was on Main Street. I said, "Here, Bill, they're not ducking, I guess we'd better not." So they told us "Now you lay down there on that rise." Oh, about ten yards apart, I suppose. Well, the Colonel and the Sergeant-Major, they saw everything was alright and they turndd around and walked back. We didn't know what we were supposed to do. I could hear some music playing so I rolled over and over until I got up to this scout, and I says, "Here, can I hear music? What is it?" He says, "That's them Jerries over there playing in their line." I said, "How far are we away?"

(CONT)

LONGSTAFFE, C.E.: (cont) "Oh," he says, "ten or fifteen yards", he says, "it's alright. I rolled back again and he said, "Tell your partner what I said." And he said, "Don't do anything unless I tell you." "O.K." Well, the next thing that happened there were some Jerries almost standing right up in front of us. My hair stood on end. There was a German patrol coming along, so quickly I rolled over to this scout fellow and I said, "What do we do now, do we fire?" He said, "For God's sake, no." He says, "keep quiet". He said, "Tell your partner to keep quiet too." So back I went and this German patrol, it looked as if they was going to walk right on top of us but they walked right along their line and that was that. By and by a voice behind me said, "Well," he says, "you're doing fine." And it was this Nots and Derby Sergeant-Major. He said, "You know what I come out for?" I said, "No". He said, "We're going to take you in now," he said. "We brought out the relief". "Well," I said, "you wouldn't believe how relieved I am."

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L.:
5th Btn.

I was on a No-man's land patrol, and I was never so scared in my life. But as we got sort of acclimatized, it sounds funny to say you get used to shelling and rifle fire but you do.

TWIGG, George W.:
4th Btn.

It was what I expected because I'd been in the Imperial Army for eight years before, but what I was surprised at was we had youngsters, seventeen or eighteen, that never even saw a rifle until they went over there and the way they behaved. They came up just perfect.

CAMPBELL, H.:
14th Btn.

You was in there, and you did your little turn of sentry on the fire step and you stepped down. And that's all there was to it, you see, and then after your twenty-four hours well, you'd been in the trenches. I think it made you feel that you'd changed over from a boy to a man. You learned more in twenty-four hours in the front line than what you'd learned with all your training that you'd had previously.

RAE, A.S.:
16th Btn.

You were so cold you would feel almost the marrow was frozen in your bones. We were wearing a kilt and at night time you would freeze into the ground and when you rose up you would have to pull part of the earth away with you. You had some trouble getting the earth loose from your kilt.

MASON, D.H.C.:
3rd Btn.

It was the worst of the winter. You lie against a wet muddy wall and it gradually bites right through you.

PALIN, F.:
14th Btn.

Due to the severe winter and the inclement weather they decided to issue out the boys a one-pound cardboard carton of anti-frostbite grease. We didn't use the stuff, so we got quite a stock on hand, so Mike Conroy, he had an idea. Him and I volunteered to go out and bring in the officers' rations for B Company. Well we did it two nights running and we snaffled all this Hartley's Strawberry Jam in stone jars, and we hid it. So he took all the anti-frostbite grease and we put in two inches of Hartley's Pure English Strawberry Jam, wiped it off, put the cover on top, put it in the sandbags. So that night we got out two sandbags apiece. We got over the bridge going into Armentieres and we got into a Cafe and I said, "Monsieur, vous desirez acheter da confiture anglaise?" "Oh, oui, oui, oui, come in the back." So we go in the back and I had my spoon ready in my puttee. I opened up the sandbag and I take out one of these cartons, take off the cover and take out my spoon and I said, "Bien, Monsieur, goutez ca. Premier classe." Well we made quite a few francs in that load, brother. I think it was around four hundred francs. Confiture Anglaise, anti-frostbite grease.

NARRATOR:

Oddly enough, anti-frostbite grease, as a weapon against the cold, never did achieve the same universal popularity as rum. But on their first night in the line the 14th Battalion had to do without.

DUNCAN, W.R.:
14th Btn.

We were in the asylum at Armentieres and we left to go in with the South Staffords and our platoon issue of rum was in a jar and the bugler, Blair, he was carrying it and when we were crossing a ditch, Bugler Blair fell down and broke the bottle and that was our first rum ration gone. He wasn't popular that night.

WILLIS:

In the trenches rum was often used and seldom abused. It was regarded by the ranks as a sort of universal cure-all. A solace at the end of day, a protection from the marrow-chilling cold and very useful for fainting spells.

MACKIE, J.O.:
7th Btn.

There was one of the Hampshire fellows, he was very, very big, and they called him "Baby", and somebody had been eating bully beef and they'd opened the can and left it open, and there was a sump in the trench where you baled the water out. Well this Baby came along and he stepped into the sump and it tilted and he went down and, as he went down, he put his hand out instinctively to save himself and of course he had to hit this cut tin and it made a really bad gash in his hand. So he was looking at it kind of stupidly, you know, and I said, "Why don't you go and show it to the officer and you might get a shot of rum". So he went up to the officer and he didn't say anything, but he held this hand out that was bleeding badly and as soon as the officer saw it he keeled right over and, of course, to get him to they were pouring the rum down his throat instead of poor old "Baby's".

SINCLAIR, Ian:
13th Btn.

Later on when we'd learned how to behave ourselves what was required in order to stay alive in the trenches we eventually were given a stretch of trench of our own.

MACDONNELL, J.M.:
4 Div. Arty.

Action at that time was stationary. You had a wire fence from Switzerland to the sea and what struck me was how quickly the abnormal became the normal. When I got to the battery they were already veterans of at least a week's standing, and they were all settled down and used to what they were doing. They probably were surprised that it was as quiet and peacelike as it seemed.

FISH, Fred:
4 Div. Arty.

It's amazing how you settled down just like moving to a new house. Each of you, you dug your gun pits, you made dugouts, you made yourself little knickknacks with a recessed biscuit tin in the wall where you kept your odds and ends. And it seemed permanent. It was your part of the world. Over the other side was the other world, you see, and that's why you got this tradition of holding the line and it was such a terrible thing if you lost a few yards of the line, you see.

MORRISEY, T.S.:
13th Btn.

It was siege war - six days in a dirty trench and six days out in reserve, and then six days back in and then six days out in support. You got awfully tired of eighteen days under shell fire and mud and machine gun fire and no hot meals. We did try to start little fires and had methylated lamps and things to get a cup of tea, but we lived on bully beef and hard biscuits and things like that. There was no glamour to it at all.

HANCOX, George T:
PPCLI

What I recall most of those first trips was the terrible condition of the trenches, especially as compared with what they were in the later days of the war. The trenches weren't continuous - they were just more or less ditches. They weren't traversed - there were no communication trenches, and a big part of them were probably ankle deep in soft gooey mud.

SINCLAIR, Ian:
13th Btn.

There hadn't been time to build trenches. The line was just becoming established in those days. There were just a few parapets built up and no connection between them.

MACTIER, W.S.M.:
13th Btn.

In that part of France there's very little subsoil. There's water bang underneath, and you couldn't dig down, they were breastworks.

ORMOND, D.M.:
1 Div. Inf.

Trenches where we went in, the rear of the trench would be a foot deep and then what they'd cleaned out of there and thrown forward would make the parapet. In some of the places the men had got doors off ruined buildings and had built up mud or sandbags and then that was looked on as a dugout. It probably was a slight protection from the weather but no other protection.

ANDERSON, T.V.:
Engineers

The trenches in many cases had water up to your knees. They dug down without thinking about the drainage, you see, and the result was when the rains came the trenches just filled, or half-filled, with water. Some of them were almost impassable.

HETHERINGTON, H.G.:
PPCLI

You tried to improve matters, you tried to drain, but there was no organized plan to better things for quite a long time because we had no material to do it. Spades were rareties even.

SCRIVEN, C.:
10th Btn.

The sandbags were so scarce that we used to listen at night until we could hear a German work party working and then we used to go out and swipe their sandbags, and the first piece of trench I ever built was built with stolen sandbags from Fritzies.

ANDERSON, T.V.:
Engineers

The engineers were supposed to lay out the work for the units to do, and then they would carry out the work themselves, with the engineers there to give them guidance or help. Well, first of all you see, they had to supply engineer stores for the revetting, putting stakes into the ground and then your stakes holding up the sandbags or a wire netting in front of the stakes holding the sides of the trenches up. And they didn't have the revetting material at that time. They got the sandbags as fast as they could but even then there were miles and miles to be done.

FISHER, A.H.:
8th Btn.

In places there were no trenches. We had one place, there was no trench there, and from one part of our platoon to the other we had to run across this open space. And our Company Commander told me to take a message over to the far end of the Company and he explained to me, he said, "You'll come to a piece of open ground", and I said, "What will I do?" He said, "Go like hell". And so when I came to this piece of open ground I did, I went like hell. There was about twenty-five yards, you know, but I went like hell, and I got over there and I had to come back through it too."

YOUNG, F.G.:
PPCLI

We were in what had been a ditch on one side of the road and the Germans were in what had been a ditch on the other. We were, in most cases, remarkably close to each other, and No Man's Land wasn't a very broad place. Later on the trenches were very far away from us and we didn't like it. We got so used to the Germans being outside our sitting-room window, as it were, that to have them somewhere down the street -- at first we couldn't get used to it. We thought, here, wait a minute, what are they going to be up to and all that sort of thing, but that's how things pan out.

METCALF, S.W.:
10th Btn.

The Germans always knew when the Canadians were in front of them, always, because I have heard conversations being passed back and forth from the German lines and our own lines. In fact, I remember one instance where there was a German hollered across about him living in Edmonton. He mentioned some of the names of the streets and buildings and so forth, and he said he was going back to Edmonton after the war. And the Canadian soldier is not backward in any way in using a little profanity, especially to the Germans, and I would not wish to repeat on here what actually was said.

NARRATOR:

While this sector of the Front was quiet, on the whole, much more than invective was being exchanged ... and the first casualties were bound to be recorded.

HANCOX, George T.:
PPCLI

The machine gun fire, if I remember, at that time was not so heavy as we experienced at later dates, especially in some of the attacks; but the Germans definitely had more machine guns than we did. The only way we could hope to keep up with them was by continuous rifle fire, and rifle fire was particularly dangerous in that area because it was part of the flat Flanders countryside, and a bullet would just travel miles and the infantry in the front line fired their rifles much more than they did in the last two or three years.

HETHERINGTON, H.G.:
PPCLI

At that time there was very little fire discipline. It took some months for the men going in for the first time to settle down. In the daytime one never heard a shot, and at night the whole countryside was one long crackle of small arms for hours on end. The only way to get to the front line was over the top. There were no communication trenches at all, and if everybody was letting off rifles in every direction you were quite likely to catch one.

ODLUM, V.W.:
1 Div.

You got to learn to take casualties as part of the rations of the day, and we did. Any battalion in the trench was expecting them at any time.

STEVENS, W.:
14th Btn.

Pat Rattigan, he was on the top of the trench pounding down sandbags and somebody said, "You crazy something, get down out of there." And the next thing some of us heard was a "crack, phut" and Pat got it in the tummy and that was our first man.

ROSS, J.W.:
4 Div. Arty.

Under normal static conditions there was always a certain amount of shelling and people were getting hit. There were some hit by snipers. They usually got it through the head and there wasn't anything you could do for them, but the others, we had stretcherbearers in the trenches who would succeed in getting people out either through the communication trenches or overland, and I may say that a stretcher party would not be shelled usually. We'd take them out during daylight if necessary.

NARRATOR:

At this stage of the game and on a relatively quiet front there were more persistent enemies than the Germans to cope with. The cold and wet, the mud, the filth and stench of almost impossible living conditions.

ROSS, J.W.:
4 Div. Arty.

The men were in hip boots all the time. The water was almost up to your knees in the trenches and trench foot was a very serious problem. Clean socks were brought down by the ration party every night and, after stand-down in the morning, the men took off their hip boots, dried their feet, anointed them with whale oil and put on the clean socks and their dirty socks were sent back to be washed and dried.

NARRATOR:

Trench-foot was to be a continuing problem for the full distance. There was another wearing problem that would last the entire four years of the War. Joke of it as they would it still eroded many an even temper.

HOSSICK, K.C.:
13th Btn.

For the first week of training the 13th Battalion of Canadians went with the Shropshire Regiment and I think that is when we discovered something about the hardships of active warfare from the standpoint of being lousy. I remember one Shropshire Sergeant. I was billeted with this lad, and the first thing he said to me, "Are you lousy, Jock?" I said, "No." "Well," he said, "by God you will be in the morning". And I certainly was. And I think those were our greatest enemies in the first year of the First World War.

ROSS, J.W.:
4 Div. Arty.

For some periods, as long as two or three weeks, we wouldn't even have our clothes off except our boots, and they were muddy all the time. We slept in our clothes when we were in action. We were lousy most of the time and we were glad to get a chance to get out to the divisional baths. We would change our underwear and get somebody else's that had been ironed out and washed by the Belgian civilian women, and get on a clean suit of underwear and go back to the trenches again, only to get lousy once more.

SEAMAN, Eric:
3rd Btn.

Brigadier General Rennie, may the Lord bless him forever, he was a perfect gentleman. He called us together when the impending trip to France was more than a latrine rumour. He says, "Boys, very shortly you'll be going to France. You will be received over there by the nobility of the country. You'll be taken into their homes, so clean yourselves up. I will not take one lousy man to France." Do you know he didn't live that down for a long time after the war. We weren't in France for a couple of hours before everyone was itching and scratching.

COSGROVE, L.V.M.:
1 Div. Arty.

After South Africa John McRae always remembered the tremendous lack of sanitation and lice and John was determined, he said, "This is going to be the most sanitary Brigade that ever came to war." And he said, "I'm going to watch them like a hawk." Then John went over one night to have a game of bridge with the 4th Battery. We were bunking together at the time and I heard John come in and "Well," he said, "that's the 4th Battery.. That's where I got them, that's the 4th Battery." I said, "What's the matter, John?" He said, "I've got enough lice here to sink a battleship and I've been laying down the law about sanitary conditions." You didn't dare speak to John for about three days.

NARRATOR:

Did you recognize the name? Yes. That was the John McRae who wrote what would become the best-known verses ever set down by a Canadian. "IN FLANDERS FIELDS". He was, at this time, Medical Officer of the First Artillery Brigade.

The importance of the Artillery to the fighting force as a whole can hardly be exaggerated and we shall be hearing much more of them as this story unfolds.

Their war was a different war from that fought by the Infantry and their living conditions differed greatly too.

ROSS, J.W.:
4 Div. Arty.

The general set-up for a battery in action was that the guns would be out in a field with the gunners probably in a billet, maybe an old barn or something, and the officers in a house, sleeping on the floor. The food was excellent. We always had canned butter, jam, bacon, tea, the odd bit of meat. We didn't suffer.

MACDONNELL, J.M.:
4 Div. Arty.

You could be in one of these positions for months and I suppose, in some cases, many months. Parts of the line were stationary for long periods. The guns, of course, were well over a mile behind the trench line. We, of course, had an easier life than the men in the trenches and, to be perfectly candid, we didn't have nearly as many casualties.

ROSS, J.W.:
4 Div. Arty.

We would dig what we called gun pits and put the gun down with the muzzle just above the level of the ground, a piece of elephant iron across the top, and then sod it as a camouflage. That was the orthodox way of going into action.

MACDONNELL, J.M.:
4 Div. Arty.

There was always an artillery officer up in the front line with the infantry. He was called the "Forward Observing Officer" and his duty was, of course, to keep contact with the situation and be available, of course, in the event of an attack to pass information back and to give orders. There was telephone communication between the guns and the officer in the front line, and we registered the German front line trenches. Registering meant that by firing the guns we determined the exact range to the German front line trench and, in the event of an attack, we had these ranges all ready and were able to assist the infantry, firing over their heads, sometimes firing on trenches that weren't more than a hundred yards from our own. Actually when we could and when we were registering the German front line, we would have our own trenches cleared, take the men out of them so as to avoid any danger of accident.

GREEN, Elliot:
4 Div. Arty.

The Germans selected their positions when the static war occurred at the end of '14, and they held practically all the ridges, always with superior observation advantages over the British troops.

ROSS, J.W.:
4 Div. Arty.

When we first went into action we knew darned well that the Germans had snipers up in the trees and the houses across but we never could see them.

GREEN, Elliot:
4 Div. Arty.

I got up in the attic of a house and somebody had kindly burrowed a little hole in the brick wall facing the German line. So we put our telescope through this, intending to see what was happening on the higher ground ahead of us. Well, never look at the German lines with the sun in your eyes with a telescope. They were watching this loophole for somebody with a glass reflecting the sunlight and they spotted us immediately. We didn't have it up two minutes before two guns fired at us and those two shells went clean through the dormer right where we were, but luckily they didn't explode in the building, they exploded just beyond it.

NARRATOR:

The Canadians had settled in and had learned to take it. On March 3rd Sir John French wrote to the Duke of Connaught, "The Canadian troops having arrived at the Front I am anxious to tell your Royal Highness that they have made the highest impression on us all. I made a careful inspection and was very much struck by the excellent physique which was apparent throughout the ranks. The soldierly bearing and steadiness with which the men stop in the ranks on a bleak, cold and snowy day are most remarkable. After three weeks preliminary education in the trenches, they have now taken over their own line, and I have the utmost confidence in their capability to do valuable and efficient service."

Timed as though to give the ring of truth to General French's compliments, to the South, near St. Eloi the senior group, the PPCLI, were doing valuable and efficient service in bringing off the first British trench raid of the War.

SCOTT, Louis:
PPCLI

This was really the first actual engagement of Canadian troops. It was not a big one by any means. It was a sudden attack of a handful of troops on a small section of the enemy line.

HANCOX, George T.:
PPCLI

It was purely a trench raid. The idea was to destroy a sap that the Germans had made there.

SCOTT, Louis:
PPCLI

A saphead was a working advanced from the main trench to give better supervision of the enemy line. Their job was of course to disturb the morale of the Germans and to bring back prisoners if possible and secure such information as they could from the workings they found in the saphead.

HANCOX, George T.:
PPCLI

I can recall Lt. Colquhoun and Major Gault going out on reconnaissance. We saw Lt. Colquhoun go out; he was about six foot seven tall and you couldn't miss him. He was actually taken prisoner shortly afterwards.

NIVEN, H.:
PPCLI

He walked over the German trenches and didn't see them. He was back about two hundred yards before he discovered he was behind the German trenches and they took him prisoner. And he was a prisoner for five years. Escaped seventeen times and always caught.

HANCOX, George T.:
PPCLI

Major Gault came back, and then about five or half-past five in the morning Number 4 Company made this raid in force. The attack was made to our immediate right. We could see them going across the open ground and there was heavy firing.

SCOTT, Louis:
PPCLI

They went into a saphead which was really only thirty yards from our front line.

NIVEN, H.:
PPCLI

They went over and killed a number, brought back two or three prisoners and then, of course, the row started, both sides raising hell.

HANCOX, George T.:
PPCLI

The Germans had such superiority in the artillery and trench mortars that we started anything like that they made us pay for it afterwards. They kept up a constant bombardment of our front line. I distinctly remember

(CONT)

HANCOX, George T.:
(cont)

seeing Major Gault and one of the Regimental Pipers carrying out a stretcher in broad daylight on exposed ground. I think it was on the wrist that he was actually hit at that time.

SCOTT, Louis:
PPCLI

Well, through this first raid they discovered that the Germans were far more comfortable in their trenches than we were, possibly because their trench was on higher ground than ours. They were on dry land. They had duck-boards to walk on and their men wore clogs with straw in them, taking their boots off and thereby keeping their feet fairly dry. They also had a far better arrangement for erecting barbed wire than we had. Our principle was one which had been in existence since the Crimean War. We knocked in big posts with a heavy maul and this caused tremendous excitement night after night when putting up wire fences because the Germans would open up fire on the wiring party. They had long steel screws which they screwed in with an axe handle into the ground thereby making no noise whatsoever. We very soon copied that, I can assure you. I don't suppose the raid lasted more than half an hour.

HANCOX, George T.:
PPCLI

And it was more for moral effect than anything else - to let the troops know they were capable of going over and dealing directly with the Germans and at the same time give the Germans a bit of a jolt.

SCOTT, Louis:
PPCLI

I think undoubtedly it disturbed them somewhat. They hadn't had anything like it before and they weren't expecting it. But I think perhaps, better than that, it improved our morale tremendously.

NIVEN, H.W.:
PPCLI

It was the first British raid on the German trenches and General French notified us that he was coming to thank the regiment for this wonderful raid and while we were being inspected by the head of the British Army, Hammy Gault had just come back from hospital and appeared behind the fence two hundred yards away. Someone in the front row spotted Hammy away off behind the fence coming down the road and they took off their hats and let a yell out of them. Our No. 1 Company was composed entirely of Guardsmen, and these men of the Guards had so far forgotten themselves as to do this when they were standing at the "Present Arms". None of them would have disgraced the regiment this way but that's the influence that Hamilton Gault had on the regiment. The Colonel and the Adjutant rushed to the front of the regiment to see what this cheer was about and all they could see was Hamilton Gault running for cover. That afternoon when they came back from parade he gave them hell and repeat.

NARRATOR:

Within three months of their arrival at the Front the Patricia's had won the good-will and admiration of every regiment which saw them and knew their record. The Press of Britain, and no less the newspapers of Canada, were making them the subject of a great deal of fullsome adulation and somewhere along the line they had picked up the nickname "Pat's Pets." All this nonsense was distasteful to the men. They begged their admirers in Canada to stop talking about them and one spokesman wrote home for publication, "Do us the credit of believing that we are neither boasters nor idiots but just soldiers who are trying to do our soldier's work at the Front as every other regiment in the British Army is. We know that our experience is trivial compared with other regiments, but we try to do as well as we can, like everybody else."

And that "Everybody Else" included the men in grey with the spiked helmets somewhat to the east.

HETHERINGTON, H.C.:
PPCLI

We went back many times to St. Eloi and there was an extraordinary place there which was known to all and sundry as The Mound. In fact it was an old brick heap. And the Germans determined to have it and he got a mine under it and blew it up and we got into a terrific turmoil of a fight there. It was in pitch darkness. Nobody knew what had happened and it was all machine gun fire and we had a tremendous number of casualties there.

O'CONNELL, H.F.:
PPCLI

We'd been staffed rather badly overnight and they're only about fourteen or fifteen of us left including Captain Agar Adamson, and sometime about noon, he crawled along and told me that as soon as it got dark we'd have to fall back as the rifles weren't working and it was impossible to do any good there. There was a terrible blizzard of sleet and snow came over and it got so dark that I passed the word to Captain Adamson and he told me to lead the party out and he'd take up the rear and we crawled out and half swam, climbed over dead bodies and dead horses and..... and in the swamp there - and got back to Shelley Farm, and as far as I know that was the finish of C-21 - I don't think it was occupied after that.

NARRATOR:

Meanwhile, to the North, the First Canadian Division had come under the command of the First British Army on March 3rd. They had not long to wait for action. On the morning of March 10th the British Force attacked the straggling village of Neuve Chapelle, the first objective in General Sir Douglas Haig's push toward La Bassée and the Aubers Ridge. The Canadians were on the British left with orders to sustain a rapid-fire harrassment of the German lines opposite to prevent the enemy from bringing up reinforcements to the battle-area from that sector. If a British breakthrough developed the Canadians too would move forward. However, after successfully dislodging the enemy and taking Neuve Chapelle the failure of communications brought the forward movement to a halt.

Here the Canadians began to doubt the efficiency of the Ross Rifle.

MORRISEY, T.S.:
13th Btn.

I marched my Company up to the north of Neuve Chapelle, and we lined a ditch in the road and the dawn came, and the shells burst, and there was the biggest noise I'd ever heard.

ARNOLD, F.C.:
7th Btn.

That was the first serious battle they had fought that spring. There was a thousand guns on a two thousand yard frontage and, Lord, the ground just rocked.

BREWER, H.G.:
14th Btn.

We opened rapid fire and kept it up for nearly half an hour. We expended all our ammunition and I remember distinctly the job of going back in relays and carting up more ammunition overland so that we could keep on firing. At that time we had the old Ross rifle which was not good under rapid fire conditions because it heated up and jammed.

DUNCAN, W. R.:
14th Btn.

That was the first time we had the chance to use them for rapid fire. And when we started rapid fire it jammed there. You take your foot and bash the bolt down.

MORRISEY, T.S.:
13th Btn.

The only orders I had was that if the Battalion in the trenches half a mile away from us got out of their trenches and went forward, it indicated the battle had succeeded and the enemy was retiring. And I was to take my company forward and occupy the trenches that had been vacated by the Battalion in front. Otherwise we were to just wait and we did just that, and pulled out that night.

MACDONNELL, J.M.:
4 Div. Arty

I remember being with the 14th Montreal Battalion.. One or two of these fellows had been in South Africa. They'd seen some fighting and they were discussing very earnestly among themselves just how they were going to follow in on this attack made by the British. Well, of course the outcome of it was as so often happened then that, going across flat fields against machine guns, they didn't get very far. We grew very accustomed to that as time went on.

NARRATOR:

If the outcome at Neuve Chapelle was disappointing they were given little time to dwell on it. In the first week of April the Division was ordered north into the Ypres Salient, there to meet an enemy which one General Officer described as "More Truculent".

CRITCHLEY, W:
10th Btn.

And from there we were moved up to the Salient - The British General who came along and told us that we were going up there, said that evidently the Canadians were tired of the quiet life and needed to get into something worthwhile and that we were going up where the enemy were more truculent. I'll never forget him saying that "They were more truculent". And that statement I will back up a hundred percent.

ARNOLD, F.C.:
7th Btn.

They put us on buses and took us from there right through to Poperinghe and then we marched in, in broad daylight right through Ypres. We marched right through to St. Jean and then we had to wait till dark. I don't know yet how we got that far without the Germans pounding us with their guns.

GREEN, Elliot:
4 Div. Arty.

The Germans must have had magnificent observation on our whole set-up, because back of the trench line which was in the valley of the Stroombeek, I think that was the name of the creek, was a forward slope right back for half a mile into our lines.

ORMOND, D.M.:
1 Div.

We went into the line on the 14th of April 1915, and we took over directly from the French. And the trenches were much worse than what we had seen. These were extraordinarily filthy and, well actually they were paved with dead Germans. There was one place in the trench where there was a hand dangling through the parapet. The men used to shake hands with it.

GREEN, Elliot:
4 Div. Arty.

They called the trenches, the whole system there, the Valley of Death and rightly so because the Germans must have paid a tremendous price in coming forward and attacking the Contemptibles in front of Ypres. You could see where the last attack of the Germans had ended in the fall of 1914 in front of our lines. There were Germans all over the place.

NARRATOR:

Dead Germans, by the hundred, to be sure. But, what is more important, live Germans by the thousand and not merely more truculent; more subtle and more venturesome; ready and waiting for a great experiment in modern warfare. Ready to kill with chemicals.

(CONT)

NARRATOR:(CONT)

Brigadier-General Odlum, then Second-in-Command of the 7th Battalion, remembers a startling message from 2nd Brigade Headquarters and his discussion of it with the Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. McHarge. A footnote to History that tells why the Canadians were without warning.

ODLUM, V.W.:
1 Div.

McHarg and I were together one day and we received a message from Brigade which had come down from higher authority saying, "The Germans are expected to attack with gas. Take the necessary precautions", and we looked at each other and we said, "What are the necessary precautions?" We hadn't the faintest idea. We'd never heard of gas before. We called Brigade and we said we'd received this message. "What are the necessary precautions?" They said, "We don't know any more than you do. If we find out anything we'll let you know. In the meantime do whatever you can." And they advised us to urinate on cloth and put that over our mouths. We thought it over seriously, and we said, "As we do not know the answer, to send word out that there will be a gas attack will only terrify and confuse everyone. It won't do any good. We can't tell them what to do." So we did not pass that message on to the Battalion.

NARRATOR:

Next week, in Chapter Five of "FLANDERS' FIELDS", the story of the second battle of Ypres, of the infamous gas attack and the fighting at Gravenstafel Ridge, St. Julien and Kitchener's Wood.

ANNOUNCER:

The first-person accounts of WORLD WAR I were arranged and edited under the direction of Frank Lalor.

The series, originated by A. E. Powley, is written, narrated, and produced by J. Frank Willis.

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, "FLANDERS' FIELDS", Part 5,
"THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES".

As last week's Chapter ended veterans of the P.P.C.L.I. and the First Division, Canadian Expeditionary Force told of their move into "The Valley of Death" The Ypres Salient where the Germans had sustained enormous casualties attacking the Contemptibles in the Fall of 1914.

NARRATOR: The Ypres Salient, a forward thrust of the Allied lines eastward, formed a great convex bulge on the otherwise fairly straight north-south direction of the Western Front in that eventful April of 1915. The long arc protruded into German-held territory and extended from Steenstraat, five miles to the north of Ypres, to St. Eloi, three miles to the south of the city, by way of Langemarck, Stroombeek, Zonnebake and Zillebake. Thus were our troops in the position of having the enemy straight ahead and on both sides to the rear as well. And here the German High Command thought, was the ideal laboratory in which to test their chlorine gas.

The German intention was not unknown to the Allies. A deserter who had surrendered to the French 11th Division shortly before it was relieved in the line by the Canadians had told all and in considerable detail. But no practical use could be made of this intelligence

(cont)

NARRATOR:(CONT)

and a warning was not issued to the ranks, simply because, at the time, there was no known way of defending against gas, as General Odlum explained last week.

Now, the General takes up the story again.

ODLUM, V.W.:

On the day of the gas attack Colonel McHarg and I went into Ypres. And it was a glorious day. The farmers between Ypres and the front line were out in their fields working and the firing was growing heavily. Big shells were being used. It was a new sensation for us to ride in the midst of that type of artillery fire but, finally, we did get into Ypres, had our baths and then we started back and, as we rode back towards our reserve battalion position, we saw something strange rolling over the ground, yellowish, brownish, dirty in colour, rolling forward with the wind. And then out of that we saw the Algerians come and many others besides Algerians. There were lots of ranks that were broken that day. A great many men were frightened, terrified, and ran away, but the Algerians as a whole did which left an open space.

NARRATOR:

The first of our troops to realize what was happening were the men of the 13th Battalion who held a position at the extreme left of the British-Canadian line adjoining French Colonials entrenched on the northern flank.

JEFFERY, J.:
13th Btn.

My battalion, the 13th, had relieved the 14th Royal Montreal Regiment. The left of our line was on the Poelcappelle Road. The French Algerian native troops were on our left. Well Thursday morning was very very quiet. It was ominous, the quietness, and then about mid-afternoon we were subjected to two hours of a very heavy bombardment, which practically blew everything to pieces. And then we saw, looking over to our left, a yellow cloud coming along the ground which poured in on the Algerians.

SINCLAIR, Ian:
13th Btn.

At first we thought it was just the intense musketry was creating this yellow haze and then it began to come into us, and the French on the left, the Zouaves, started pouring into our trench, coughing and bleeding and dying all over the place, and then we realized what it was.

NARRATOR:

News of the gas attack and the stepped-up shelling of Ypres was slow to reach the majority of the First Division who had been withdrawn to rest billets behind the front lines that morning.

NICHOLSON, N.:
16th Btn.

On the 22nd of April we had come back out and went into billets along the Yser Canal, and after morning parade those who wished could get a pass and go into Ypres. Ypres at that time was inhabited. The Cloth Hall had been shelled but not to a great extent, and then the Germans began suddenly shelling the town square. And people were screaming and running hither and thither. As a matter of fact, I saw one woman carrying a baby and the baby's head was gone, and it was quite devastating.

BREWER, H.G.:
14th Btn.

I can see them now. There was one youngster, probably fifteen years old, carrying his grandmother on his back and there was a little baby about five years old in the doorway across the street, deserted and crying. And this horde of people with carts and these Colonial troops passing in a mob and the troops, a lot of them had been gassed, their faces were yellow. And I've never forgotten it, this awful spectacle.

ARNOLD, F.C.:
7th Btn.

When this gas attack came up we saw these Algerian fellows running. Oh they were really running. Poor fellows, the rifle fire they were good on but when these big shells, ton and half shells, were bursting, and the gas, that was really too much for them.

NARRATOR:

The Canadian 13th had close contact with the disaster in the Langemarck sector and found their own position perilous in the extreme.

JEFFERY, J.:
13th Btn.

Well their casualties, when we went over to have a look at things, they were simply countless. It was a terrific thing. It was good psychology on the part of the German. Obviously their intelligence had shown them native troops opposing them on that particular sector and he put his gas on them first. And then the Germans poured in through the native troops and got in around our left, and then we were subjected to another bombardment from some guns they had captured from the rear. So we had it on three sides, the front, the left, and the rear.

SINCLAIR, Ian:
13th Btn.

Our line of trenches promptly disappeared so we had nothing except a foot or eighteen inches of cover and so we fought from that.

JEFFERY, J.:
13th Btn.

Well our casualties of course were terrific.

SPROSTIN, J.:
4 Div. Arty.

We weren't equipped with a gas mask. Men were coughing, spitting and choking, and we didn't know what to do till the M.O. of the 14th Battalion, Colonel Scrimger, was rushing up and down telling everyone to urinate on your pocket handkerchief, tie it over your mouth, and he saved thousands of lives. There was quite a number of casualties. There was about twenty-three of us laying in a rye field. We were laying there wounded and we saw Jerries going right and left. He broke right through, he passed our guns. Wave after wave of them went by, and that's what I couldn't figure - they didn't bother taking prisoners. They could have taken nearly all our brigade prisoner if they had wanted to but they didn't bother. They were pushing through to get to a certain point, and the Third Brigade, they met them and had a real set-to, and the first thing the Jerries were going back and we re-assembled the battery, and we all got back to the guns, what were left.

SINCLAIR, Ian:
13th Btn.

There was some pretty stout fighting on the part of the Battalion, there's no question of that. Our machine gun section did a magnificent job. We were the left Battalion of the whole British Army on that particular occasion.

NARRATOR:

First to rush to the 13th Battalion's assistance were eight men of the 14th then resting in St. Julien. They followed a certain Lance Corporal Fred. Fisher of the 13th who needed help with a machine gun.

PALIN, F.:
14th Btn.

We were out in the sun doing a bit of cleaning up, and the first thing we knew we got a "Stand-to" and I remember one Lance Corporal Fred. Fisher of the 13th Battalion, he came down looking for eight volunteers to carry up a machine gun, so eight of us stepped out. Well he set up his gun and we got in front of the graveyard of St. Julien village in a kind of sunken road or something. But all these Turko troops came through us. All they could say was, "Allemain, come plenty". And they were coming plenty, too.

NARRATOR:

Lance Corporal Fred. Fisher's conspicuous skill and daring in working his Colt machine gun into a position to cover the safe withdrawal of the 10th Field Battery which had been holding off an enemy force bent on occupying St. Julien won him the Victoria Cross. The first to be awarded a Canadian in the Great War. He was killed in action next day.

By evening a stand-to order had come to all elements of the Canadian Force. From reserve positions they were rushed into the gap left open by the hapless Algerians on the 13th Battalion's exposed flank.

ODLUM, V.W.:

We were at the point where the break occurred. We were told to find out where the gap was and go and fill it. And I had to find out in darkness of night with all that turmoil going what had happened, where it had happened, where we were to go and how we were to get in

(CONT)

ODLUM, V.W.:(CONT)

And I remember going over and seeing Colonel Loomis of the 13th Battalion who was just on the edge of the break -- casualties all around him, his Headquarters just filled with moaning, groaning, bleeding men. All Loomis knew was that it had happened out that way. So I went back to Colonel McHarg and told him the situation as I had found it and then we started to move into that black darkness and be ready to block it up when daylight came. We had a pretty bad time. The Germans were there with the aftermath of the gas and they were all around us. The great bulk of our men got down into trenches or ditches or anything low because you avoided bullets by doing that, but you didn't avoid the gas, you took it. And when you saw men suffering, dying with the gas, oh it was a pitiful thing. I stayed up in the high spots. I would rather have the bullets than the gas. Fortunately for us it was thinning out by the time it had reached us and as a unit we were usable still, and we were able to make a plug at the point where the break had occurred, and somewhere on the other side of that hole the Germans were. They couldn't do anything more until the morning came, too. So it was trying as well as we could to guess the other man's position and form a position that would counter his.

NARRATOR:

In the confused aftermath of the gas attack and its near disaster the Artillery were aware that something extraordinary was in motion but what it was, and where, and how serious, they were some time in learning.

ROSS, J.W.:
4 Div.Arty.

We had no idea what had happened. It came right out of the blue. We had one man hit by a bullet in the gun pit and I pulled one gun out and had it laid with the fuses set at zero, expecting the Germans were going to rush the battery. This never materialized.

GREEN, Elliot:
4 Div. Arty.

The Germans advanced, not as far as they could have, but they advanced far enough to catch us in the flank, and our road back to Ypres, the main St. Julien-Ypres road, was under their fire. We took up a new position so that we could engage the flank that was left open from our infantry line right back to the Yser Canal there. That was, oh three or four miles. There was nobody in it at all. The Algerians had lost their whole field artillery completely. They hadn't anything left.

NARRATOR: Troops were now rushing up to the gap along the whole front. Individual companies of the same unit were rushed to different sectors - to plug the spot nearest to where they were.

BERNIER, George:
14th Btn. The bugle came along for fall-in and we fell in and we got orders to march off right away. When I left I just had my rifle and the light equipment. I didn't take my haversack nor water bottle. We didn't know where we were going. We knew it was fall-in and were marching.

SCOTT, L.C.:
7th Btn. We went off in shrapnel formation -- that was in scattered groups, five men in each group, so the shrapnel wouldn't cause too many casualties.

MACKIE, J.O.:
7th Btn. The Germans had evidently lined the road up in the daytime and, as we went along the road, they hit right in front of us. And there was a big splash and a big fire there. And the fellow stopped ahead of me and I said, "For goodness sake keep moving or the next one will hit us."

SCOTT, L.C.:
7th Btn. The gas was rolling in so we hit straight for it and we went right across the rear of the 2nd Brigade of Artillery eighteen-pounders, and they all turned around from their guns and gave us a cheer as we went into it. And the cloud was just starting to get thick at that point.

MACKIE, J.O.:
7th Btn. We'd look at the other fellow and he'd be crying. And you'd say, "Well, what are you crying for?" And he'd say, "Well, you're doing the same".

SCOTT, L.C.:
7th Btn. We continued on, we got our positions. As we were digging in all these gassed Moroccans and Algerians were coming through our lines.

MACKIE, J.O.:
7th Btn. We had these stupid trench tools to dig with. We were digging away like mad but you weren't getting anywhere.

McLAUGHLIN, R.:
14th Btn.

We dug in on the left of the road and our Platoon Commander, Mr. Steers, he said, "Remember, boys, that man for man you're much better than any of these fellows ever will be. You can lick them and we're going to do it."

PRICE, C.B.:
14th Btn.

There was a terrific bombardment some distance off on our right and, on the hill in front of us there was a mass coming down, mixed up French and Germans, you couldn't see who it was. Allan Shaw was our Company Commander. He said, "You'd better get somebody to go out and see if we can find out who they are". So, before anything could be done Stewart Le Mesurier went out. Well, I knew that no man could go out on any job like that alone, so I ran out afterwards. And just then he saw two men coming fairly close down this hill to us and he challenged them, and one of them put up his rifle and shot him, shot him through the hand. So then just instinctively I put up my rifle and I shot both of them. And I rather think that the fact that their scouts were shot made them feel that there was a force there and instead of being able to go right through as they could have, they stopped and dug in themselves.

WHITEMAN, H.H.:
14th Btn.

The Germans apparently didn't realize how easy it would have been to go through, so they started to dig in and they were in a better position. They were on the top of the ridge. We were down below. We started to dig in and we dug all night with these entrenching tools so that by morning when dawn came and the danger time had arrived we were perhaps up to our hips in trench.

NARRATOR:

The gap was plugged and the Canadians were digging in, but the Corps and Divisional Commanders remembered the military maxim that the best defence is a strong offence and issued orders to mount two great counter attacks. The first of these was against Kitchener's Wood where a British Battery had been overrun. The 10th and 16th Battalions were ordered to recover the guns.

DUNLOP, Charles:
16th Btn.

We found ourselves on the Canal with a lot of Belgian troops there, and French. We were sampling their cognac and they were sampling our rum when the word flashed down the line that we were to get ready right away and hike. So we hiked.

NICHOLSON, N.:
16th Btn.

We got down to Ypres and we swung north then along the highway going up to St. Jean. The Germans by this time were shelling the highway all the way along.

OLDAKER, H.H.:
16th Btn.

We had a lot of difficulty getting up that road. You see there was only the one road going up there and there was artillery traffic and supplies and civilians and ambulances coming back.

ORMOND, D.M.:

I might say these people, retiring, broke down our wire communications so that everything by now was by cyclist or mounted orderly or by runner. We went up to Wieltje and waited there when another message reached us that we were to report to the 3rd Brigade Headquarters, so the Colonel took me along with him to the 3rd Brigade Headquarters where we stood by. Eventually about ten o'clock a message came in from Division that the 10th Battalion and the 16th were to recapture the guns that were in Kitchener's Wood. The 16th Battalion was only partly in position so we moved up past them and got into position on a two-company front, shoulder to shoulder, and ditched our packs.

McLENNAN, A.M.:
16th Btn.

And we left our great coats and packs right the way we stood. In fact the Boche, the next day, he really shelled that field. He thought it was troops lined up. Great coats and packs! The moon had just gone down and it was a starry night so that you could see the outline of Kitchener's Wood.

ORMOND, D.M.:

When the 16th Battalion assembled in behind us our Colonel gave the word to kick off. It was a bayonet charge. Well there was a hedge a short distance ahead of us. It was a beech hedge and about four feet six high, but apparently when it was young, to support it, they put a wire through it, and this was heavy wire so when they hit that it just stopped everything. There was no talking, not a word, but with your entrenching tool and bayonet scabbards and the rifle butts, that created a great deal of noise.

McLENNAN, A.M.:
16th Btn.

Well those sort of noises carry a long way at night, and the next thing we knew a Very light went up that lit up the whole countryside. Well then it just opened up - rapid fire with rifles and machine guns, which is pretty ugly. And to green troops of course it was an appalling experience to start with, a stunning experience. The Germans had advanced behind the gas and come in front of that wood and dug in there - a shallow trench but good cover.

ORMOND, D.M.:

It was a well-sited trench. It was about forty yards short of the wood from our point of view so that they had the whole woods behind them and they were excellent troops, but of course we hit them with tremendous preponderance.

CRITCHLEY, W.:
10th Btn.

We had taken the Germans by surprise. They had never thought any army would ever think of doing a thing like that. We routed them out of their trenches and we re-captured a battery of eighteen pounder guns the British had had to leave.

ORMOND, D.M.:

But we couldn't handle the guns. We had no horses. We captured them and the engineers came along afterwards and put them out of business and the guns were within thirty or forty yards of the face of the woods but we went on through because there was no use in quitting in the middle of a woods. We went through to the other side of it.

COX, Sid.:
10th Btn.

It was all so mixed up you just didn't know for anything. That's where I got the biggest scare of my life. I went into a bit of a hut there. I went to go in and a great big German stepped out and he may've been going to surrender, I couldn't tell you, but I got out of there in a hurry. I pulled the trigger and ran. Boy that man startled me, I didn't expect anything.

ORMOND, D.M.:

Well, it turned out that I was the senior officer of the two Battalions in the line left unwounded, so when we went through and there was nothing more to do in there and we knew we were over half a mile in behind the Boche, right in the middle of them, the only thing I could see was to go back because the forces we knew were assembled by the Boche, they'd get in behind us and scupper the works. So we pulled back immediately to start and form a position. There weren't so many left. The first five minutes took four hundred and eighty odd.

COX, Sid.:
10th Btn.

It wasn't so bad going in. It was trying to get back out, because our own fellows wouldn't believe it was us and they were shooting us. You would holler at them, and "Oh, we've heard that, you can't fool us". And we were hiding behind logs, trees, trying to come back in again. Hardest time to convince our own fellows that we were Canadians.

ORMOND, D.M.:

We took the old German trench, you see, and we tried to separate the two units but that was impossible because the Boche had already made a redoubt and were starting to machine gun us. In fact they killed eighteen out of thirty-two in a couple of minutes. We had cut their front clean, you see. When we tried to outflank them and charge them they shot the men with flares, it was so close. The 2nd Battalion tried to come in and support us behind and they were mowed down worse than we were.

BOOKER, Jack:
2nd Btn.

That is when Major Pennant got it. I always remember him as a big heavy man with his cane, yelling "No. 1 Company, charge." Well, he only got about ten feet when down he went. And we lost a lot of men trying to get out of that open field.

BEDDOE, A.B.:
2nd Btn.

It was just a great bare field sloping slightly away towards the front, downhill, and we advanced in open formation across this till we came to a German communication trench. We got into this thing and got out our entrenching tools and began to dig, and turned the parapet around so that it was facing the enemy. And that is where we stayed.

GRAHAM, W.F.:
2nd Btn.

One thing that I noticed more than anything else in the front lines was the noise of a big battle. The screaming of wounded men was something you'd never thought of before. You never realized that things like that would happen.

NARRATOR:

Artillery firepower was reduced by the loss of the French guns but what there was fought with a will.

GREEN, Elliot:
4 Div. Arty.

We fired all that night as much ammunition as we could get off on Kitchenier's Wood generally. Of course, we couldn't see anything during that night, we just fired blind and by the map. And I think we did some good. At least we let the Germans know that there was some batteries in action, and it may have had something to do with making them a little cautious about advancing.

NARRATOR:

The second counter attack mounted that night called to action the 1st and 4th Battalions from some miles behind the lines at Vlamertinghe. Their job was to fight up the road from Ypres to Pilckem to the extreme left of the gap, where the German thrust posed the greatest danger. Were the Germans to come down this road to Ypres and on south to St. Eloi they would have encircled the whole Allied Army in the Salient. In the early hours of the morning the 1st and 4th Battalions attacked northward.

FRASER, James:
4th Btn.

We moved out of Vlamertinghe up across the Canal. We went in with the Band. Our Band played us up till a shell came over and that split the Band up and we went on from there across over the Canal on the pontoon bridge there, and our first casualties started in just after we crossed the Canal bank.

TODD, Joe:
4th Btn.

On our way up we went through this little village. We seen women and kids killed there, and it put the fear of God in my heart.

YOUNG, N.M.:
4th Btn.

Our orders were to advance with our left flank resting on the Ypres-Pilckem Road.

TWIGG, G.W.:
4th Btn.

There was about two thousand yards of open country up to the Pilckem Ridge. The skipper of the Company, Walter Towers, he said, "Well listen, boys, take off your packs," he said, "we got a long way to go." So we took off our packs and we started to advance.

YOUNG, N.M.:
4th Btn.

We ran into a lot of difficulty because one of the fields we had to cross was dotted with manure piles and our men looked upon that as shelter and of course the manure piles were not only no shelter, but they were simply target attractors and we suffered a lot of casualties.

TWIGG, G.W.:
4th Btn.

We advanced and kept advancing and we got up to about six hundred yards. Then the artillery fire really got bad and the machine gun fire and we could see the troops up on Pilckem Ridge. We found out later that they were the Prussian Guards. There was a farmhouse on the ridge and I said to my machine gunner, I said, "Listen, there's a machine gun on the corner of that farmhouse. For Pete's sake quieten him down. I think he's getting most of our men." So he said, "O.K." Well he plastered them but as soon as you knocked one lot out another got in. Well we finally got up to about three hundred yards. Then we got the order to dig in. I looked back and there wasn't a sign of anybody and my section sergeant said to me, "My God, if they had any sense at all, or any guts at all, they'd come over here and they wouldn't have to fire a shot. They could just take us all prisoners." There wasn't a sign of anybody for two thousand yards back of us, and they were up on a ridge there, and they were thicker than thieves.

NARRATOR:

In the afternoon a second attack was ordered, led by the British with the Canadians in support. But German resistance stiffened and the line was not advanced.

FRASER, James:
4th Btn.

The Middlesex and some of the Buffs and the Leicesters came up and went through our line, and they were just simply bowled over like ninepins.

TROWLES, Victor:
4th Btn.

We'd been advancing for some time and a little fellow of the Yorkshire Light Infantry flopped down beside me. He was hit in the shoulder and I went over and got his field bandage out and patched it up. Hadn't more than tied it and he was hit in the same place again.

ALLEY, H.R.:
3rd Btn.

The 1st and 4th Battalions must have lost three-quarters of their strength without any question. But it scared the German High Command to the point where they stopped to find out what all this meant. That gave us time to bring up the odd battalion from here and the odd battalion from there and so forth. We finally had about twice as many British battalions in the Canadian Division as we had Canadians. But this counter-attack just saved the whole business.

TWIGG, G.W.:
4th Btn.

It was a glorious day for the Canadians because these men had had practically no training. But was I ever proud of them. If they'd have been trained for ten years they couldn't have acted better. To think of those kids that had been pulled from all over the country and the way they behaved! In a murderous fire like that! I never felt so proud of a bunch of boys in my life.

NARRATOR:

While the Germans paused to consider, the gap was completely plugged; the advantage of surprise gained in the gas attack was never exploited and the opportunity for a significant break-through was lost forever. The 10th and 16th Battalions held firm on the edge of Kitchener's Wood while the 2nd backed them up at nearby Oblong Farm.

ORMOND, D.M.:

We stayed in there all that day. We had control of the woods, but we were enfiladed from both sides and, during the day of the 23rd, we were shelled from both sides and from the back.

BEDDOE, A.B.:
2nd Btn.

There wasn't very much sense in trying to do any firing ourselves because you put your finger up and you'd get it shot off. But we did have a machine gun, and Hubert Rogers and another lad were in charge of it. They would throw an empty belt over to us and we would fill their belt from our very sparse supply of ammunition and throw it back to them. And it was almost like a game because every time a shell would come over this machine gun would open up - pppp about four rounds. It was all they could spare, just as much as to say, "Well, you didn't get me that time, you see." And this went on all day Friday.

NARRATOR:

On Saturday April 24th, the Germans returned to the offensive, and the 8th Battalion, still in their original trenches, bore the brunt of the attack. Again, as on the 22nd, gas was used, and again the effects were horrifying. But the Canadians stood firm and fought back furiously.

STEVENS, Lester:
8th Btn.

I saw the Germans hop over their trenches and put these cans in front of their trenches. I wondered what they were doing, see, just one here and one a little further along. And the smoke from that boiled up and the wind blew it towards us. I thought it was smoke and they were going to come up behind it, see. So we started firing at them so as to prevent them from following up this smoke. And then when it came along towards us it turned green, a greeny yellow colour. It came up and went over the trenches and two fellows, one on my right and one on my left, they dropped and they both died. But I was a bit of an athlete in those days. I could swim under water for two minutes and as soon as I saw that gas coming I tied a handkerchief over my nose and mouth and that saved my life.

BOWYER, J.H.:
5th Btn.

The show was getting pretty hot with the 8th Battalion. My Company was in close support and then we were rushed up. Men came staggering up that were gassed and I went and helped these fellows to make them comfortable by the side of a barn, gathered up any old coats that were laying around and covered them up. I even gave them my overcoat and that night I got cold and I went back to see if I could find a coat or something -- saw these fellows and they were all dead, great bunch of bubbles at their mouth and nostrils.

UPRITCHARD, J.:
8th Btn.

The 8th Battalion was on the apex of the attack. They didn't come in skirmishing order comparable to the British troops, they come in heavy waves.

JEFFERY, J.:
13th Btn.

They came across our front in column of fours.

ARNOLD, F.C.:
7th Btn.

I was shooting over the window-sill of a ruined building. I saw about two hundred Germans come out on the end of a hedge and they started to dig in out in the open instead of digging in behind the hedge. Well our boys were fairly good shots, and in a few minutes there wasn't one standing up. They were gone.

NARRATOR:

Then the pressure grew on the apex of the Canadian line; on the 7th, 13th and 15th Battalions.

BREWER, H.G.:
14th Btn.

People were being blown up all around us, bodies flying up in the air. So eventually they just blew us out of that position and we had the order to retire and retirement was up a long slope right out in the open, no cover at all. The bullets were, well it was just like being out in a rainstorm. I don't know how we ever got up, the few of us that did. But by that time we were disorganized and there were 13th and 14th and Engineers and Signallers and everybody all mixed up.

JEFFERY, J.:
13th Btn.

By the time we came out of that mess we counted one hundred and twenty-five, I think, out of eleven hundred men, many killed. Of course many had been taken prisoner as well, and others had become lost and so on and were with other units, you see. It was a terrific show.

NARRATOR:

The apex of the Canadian thrust crumbled under the mounting pressure and fell back slowly to form a new line on the crest of Gravenstafel Ridge. All that was left of the 10th Battalion was moved from Kitchener's Wood to re-inforce the new position.

CRITCHLEY, W.:
10th Btn.

The 10th Battalion was ordered out to reinforce the 7th Battalion on top of the Gravenstafel. Well, it was broad daylight. In full view of the Hun we had to individually get out and race across this ploughed field and reassemble and go up to the Gravenstafel.

COX, Sid.:
10th Btn.

And they got quite a lot of us coming out, you see because we had to run about fifty feet, jump into a cabbage patch or a wheat field, or something or other there and you would see three or four run and they would get one - and then you'd think, well I'll crawl, and then you would see three or four crawl and they would get one. No, I'm going to run. You had to make your mind up which way you wanted to be hit.

ORMOND, D.M.:

We did very well. We got out with a hundred and eighty-eight, three officers and a hundred and eighty-eight other ranks out of, I think it was eight hundred and twenty-three or something. So then we were ordered to our own Brigade. We went up to report to Brigade Headquarters and General Currie himself came out and gave the men a cheery word. He pointed out the so-called Locality "C" which is the crest of the Gravenstafel Ridge. So we went up there and found the trenches that had been opened up by the French in October of '14. They were five-man openings with the dirt thrown forward and no parados and it was very hard to dig in.

CRITCHLEY, W.:
10th Btn.

We looked over there and all we could see was masses of the Germans coming up in mass formation. Their officers were still on horseback then. They were just coming right up.

ORMOND, D.M.:

They came on in close order with their rifles at the high port and some of them had put on the kilts of the 15th Battalion that they'd come through. And they were a queer looking mob. We stood up on our parapet and gave three ruddy cheers and shook our fists at them. We gave them everything we had and they figured it wasn't worth while and they just turned around and went back. They did that again and we did it again. We were quite happy about it. So then they did it a third time. When they went back the third time we thought we'd won the war. We'd stopped them but, within a matter of minutes, the Boche started to play the piano on us. He really started to go after us with the four-ones and the five-nines and machine guns and we were being lifted right out of the ground. We had no machine guns. Our four guns had never reached us, so we had nothing to come back at him with except Ross rifles, and instead of getting off twelve or fifteen rounds a minute we could only get off two or three. They were jamming and men would have to lay down and take their heel to force the bolt open. We decided that we'd better pull back and let him come up onto the skyline and then

(CONT)

ORMOND, D.M.: (CONT) we'd get our own back. So we passed the word along and we went back about a hundred yards, and when we started to organize we had a hundred and forty-six left out of a hundred and eighty-eight that we'd gone up with. And we took up position then but he didn't offer to come forward. Then eventually we saw some officers down below us and it was my job to go down and see them and it happened to be Colonel Currie of the 48th, Toronto, and we suggested they come up on our left and we'd go back and clean up this ridge. But he said they had received orders from the 3rd Brigade to go back to the GHQ line.

NARRATOR: The Third Brigade was once again retiring.

ODLUM, V.W.: I had already tried to get our men out by the left to form a new line behind. We got about two hundred, I think, and the two hundred we re-formed. But those forward were either casualties or prisoners.

ARNOLD, F.C.:
7th Btn. The order came to retire and I could see the fellows from where I was going back along a hedge and I never saw anything more wonderful for what you'd call semi-untrained troops. They went out on the brow of a hill and they run at about six pace intervals and most of the time you couldn't see them for bursting shells. The Germans were really throwing the big stuff into them. And these fellows took their position up and then they started to fire. I tell you I was proud to be a Canadian! It was really a wonderful thing!

SCOTT, L.C.:
7th Btn. It was just every man for himself - shoot what you can see. Every man stood his ground and everywhere that the men were sent they went. Dug in. If you couldn't dig in well you laid flat in the open. But from there on our casualties were very heavy. They got their breath and they were coming back for a fresh attack and Sergeant Peerless was behind waving his rifle and saying, "Give the sons of bitches hell, boys." There was more heavy shelling and we got moved, and we ran right into the Germans, and I finished up as a prisoner of war. We got trapped. We were out behind the German lines. We stayed too long.

RICE, N.:
7th Btn. They came over and were all over us in a few minutes. They rounded us up in a party of twenty-eight and marched us off.

NARRATOR:

Their success at the apex encouraged the Germans to assault the centre of the Canadian line from Kitchener's Wood to St. Julien. By mid-morning the battle was joined and again the Canadians were involved in the murderous business of a slow fighting withdrawal. The duel in front of Kitchener's Wood was ferocious.

BEDDOE, A.B.:
2nd Btn.

By noon on Saturday, they were really beginning to lay it on. There was a chap we noticed was crawling across this mustard patch in behind us, and he had to move very slowly because he was in full view of the enemy there. But he got out. And he had a message that we were to stay on till four o'clock and then try and make a retirement. So at four o'clock we tried to retire. It was a most terrifying experience to see your chums going out, one after the other, out the end of this little trench that we had, out into the open where machine gun fire was just squirting in like through a hose, and one after the other they would go over like jack rabbits, and they were piling up there. And we were moving towards this ultimate destiny, you might say, and feeling well my turn is next. I got through it. Why, I don't know. I guess I was lucky, but I found myself over there. It was a feeling of great elation.

PATRICK, George:
2nd Btn.

Our Company had left, and the little group that I was in didn't get word to go. I said, "Well, let's get out of here." My chum said, "Nothing doing. We dug this hole and we are going to stay here." Well another group came in from the other Brigades, and this officer who had brought them in asked me if I knew the orders. I said, "No, I haven't any idea. But," I said, "the Adjutant and the Commanding Officer are back in that farm." And he said, "Will you go over and find out for me?" And finally I said, "All right, I'll go." The Assistant Adjutant, he said, "Oh, the orders are for "A" Company to retire, followed by "B" Company, followed by "C" Company, followed by "D" Company, followed by details." So I said, "Thanks very much." And just about that time that I recalled my chum saying that this was a hole that we had dug and we were going to stay there, and I said, "Excuse me, Mr. Turner, are we running away from this gang?" He said, "Oh no, we are simply retiring to a prepared position. I said, "That's all right, that's fine." So I went back and I said to my chum, "Let's get out of here."

SEAMAN, Eric:
3rd Btn.

All you could see in the woods was a succession of spiked helmets. And there were hordes of them came at us there. We were just unfortunate, we were out on a sort of point of a triangle. And they got around behind us. We were so busy there we didn't know it. Our own machine gun section, there were only about eight of us. Well, three of us were captured. The others had gone, you see. I remember one, a former mounted policeman, John Hewitt, a shot went right through his cranium and came out almost between his eyes. I thought he was gone but he began to stir after a while and stood up on his rubbery legs. And I said, "How do you feel, John?" "Oh," he said, "I feel as though I had been on a drunk for a week," he said. "That's all". And he was able to march back with us. Came back to Canada and only died a few years ago. After they caught us and took all worthwhile souvenirs from us we went back through their reserve lines, and there was trench after trench after trench chuck full of Germans. If they had known they were so close to a break-through, and they'd kept on going, they might have done something. But the Canadians stood fast and the supports came up, the British supports, and we held them.

NARRATOR:

At the apex, the incredibly tenacious 8th Battalion, which had born the brunt of the gas attack that morning and had fought on furiously all day still held to its original positions as darkness fell to end that long long Saturday.

STEVENS, Lester:
8th Btn.

The Germans didn't realize the success of the gas attack. If they had of done they'd have gone right through to Calais. But there were so many of us that could still hang on and shoot and that's what stopped them. Currie told Lipsett to retire but Lipsett phoned back to Currie and told him he wasn't going to retire so we held on. We stuck in the same trenches were in originally.

NARRATOR:

Brigadier-General Currie now made a last desperate effort to hold the remnants of the apex as he resumed command of his units and re-organized them for a final stand.

ODLUM, V.W.:

We were returned to the 2nd Brigade. Currie came and took the 7th Battalion, what was left of it, and took us up again to block up on top of the ridge at the left of the 8th Battalion. He said, "The Suffolks are out in front of you so you will be all right." I did the normal thing about putting men out to do shovel tasks, dig firing trenches, prepare ourselves for a defensive position and we were doing it very nicely when out of a fog that then covered the area we saw figures coming towards us. The Suffolks shouldn't be coming back that way. Who were these? And we stood and looked at each other. They were the Germans. I said to a lad near me, "Go up there and see who those are and come back and tell me." He started out and the moment he moved forward the Germans commenced to fire and the fight was on. And out of that rough beginning the struggle for the retention of Gravenstafel Ridge on the left of the 8th Battalion took shape. Rifle fire, machine gun fire, was over the whole area. It was like a storm of falling rain.

NARRATOR:

By the morning of the 25th the gaps in the Canadian lines were being filled by British militia units "The Territorials".

STEVENS, Lester:
8th Btn.

I remember the Durham Light Infantry coming up and taking over from us. And they were all kids and I spoke to some of the kids, see. I said, "Where are you from?" He says, "We've just come out from England." I said, "Haven't you been in any trenches before?" "Never been in any trenches before," he says. "We don't know nothing." "Goodnight," I said, "I'm sorry for you." In fact I said to one or two of our chaps, I said, "It's a damn shame", I said, "for them to come in here and take over from us. We should stay here and carry on." But the Durham Light Infantry came up as a unit. So we got orders to get out and the Durham Light Infantry took over.

UPRITCHARD, J.:.
8th Btn.

The Durhams never made it because they got such a cutting down that they were practically mowed down before they ever got into the line.

CRITCHLEY, W.:
10th Btn.

I have never seen such slaughter in my life. They were straight from England. They had never heard a shot fired in anger. They were lined up - I can see it still - in a long line - straight up and the Hun opened up on them with machine guns. They were just raked down. It was pathetic.

NARRATOR:

And everywhere -- up and down the line -- went Brigadier-General Currie, directing, deploying, urging and encouraging his Brigade.

BAGSHAW, F.B.:
5th Btn.

We saw a man on the height of land walking along the ridge from the 8th Battalion, and presently this fellow jumped down into a sap and came along the line into our Battalion. And he said, "Tuxford, who the hell was that shooting at me?" And this was Currie.

NARRATOR:

Like many soldiers before and since, and contrary to regulations, Colonel Bagshaw, who was then the Orderly Room Sergeant of the 5th Battalion, on the right of the 8th, kept a diary. This is part of his entry for Sunday the 25th of Apri,

BAGSHAW, F.B.:
5th Btn.

"The Brigadier is right with us today. He came into our trenches early in the morning. The fire is more intense and cannot last. We are enfiladed and in danger of being cut off. Anxiously all day we look for reinforcements and nothing comes. The 8th Durhams have retired on our left in some confusion and our Headquarters is tumbling about our ears. Our casualties are heavy but not so bad as the rest of the Brigade who have been badly hit with the gas." Later in the day Currie was sitting there and a runner came up and handed Currie a message and so Currie then wrote out a message to Tuxford to carry out the retirement in accordance with previous orders, you see. (Diary resumes)
"Ordered to retire at once in daylight. God help us

(CONT)

BAGSHAW, F.B.:(cont) all. It is madness to go before dark. We say goodbye to each other and part. The Adjutant and Major Dyer took orders for retirement to front trenches as phones and lines were down."

NARRATOR: Now the 8th, shattered and exhausted, began to retire.

FISHER, A.H.:
8th Btn.

We were at the apex so we got cut off. They cut through us at both sides. And we had been given orders to retire. Well, we said, tell H.Q. to come up and look at the slope on that ground at the back of us. They would have slaughtered us going up the hill. "Well," I said, "Look, there is only one way we can get away. We can't run up that slope, we got to get down in the ditches. And they can't hit us with a machine gun or any other gun down in the ditch." So we got down in the ditch and we moved, and then there was a little lull, and Arthur and Bob decided they'd take a short cut. They both got killed, and I stayed in the ditch. I crawled through this hawthorne hedge and then when I came out I saw some other fellows, you see, so I just hooked up with them. And there was an officer there. I don't know who he was, but whoever he was he should have got a decoration for what he did. There had been a parapet thrown up there and he collected every one of us at the back of it. We still had our rifles, you see. And he said, "Now stay where you are and don't fire." And we stayed there, and by then there must have been two hundred of us collected from the 5th Battalion and a few other battalions. And then after that Fritzie got more confident of his position and he just came forward and then we had the order to let go. And we let go, and they must have thought the whole Canadian Army was at the back of it. It was an absolute surprise to them. But we held them up to dark and they couldn't go forward any more. And that was the grand finale for the Second Battle of Ypres.

ODLUM, V.W.: British battalions were coming up and relieving at the end of the Salient and in due course the British battalions took the whole of that line over and we formed a reserve support line in behind them.

NARRATOR: All across the front men reeled back to their units behind the new front lines. Men who had fought for days and nights on end, who had endured, somehow, beyond their powers of endurance, staggered back drunk with exhaustion.

STEVENS, Lester:
8th Btn.

All I did was order my men to get out and get back and report to the transport section, away back. I said, "It's about five miles." So we all went back individually or in twos and threes and so on. But on the way back I found one of my chaps sitting in a trench. And he was sitting in water up to his waist. I thought he was dead, see, so I got in the trench and shook him, see, to see if he was alive or dead, but he was alive. He woke up. I said, "What the hell are you doing in here?" "Oh," he says, "they started sending over the Jack Johnsons." They called them - big shells, so he got in this trench. And then he was so exhausted that he fell asleep. So I said, "Come on with me". I saw a picture painted somewhere, soldiers walking down the road, you know, coming back from Ypres, holding their arms up in the air, gasping for breath, see, trying to breathe. And we were doing the same thing. I did it myself. I walked along with my hands up in the air to try and get air into my lungs. You couldn't use any energy because you, well you were like as if your windpipe had been partly shut off.

BOWYER, J.H.:
5th Btn.

There was a Canadian Scottish - he was cut across the forehead and both his hands were cut and he was crawling. And I said, "Well, Jock," I said, "I'll try and carry you out if you promise not to put your hands in my face." I began to feel a little sick at the stomach from the blood. And he said, "O.K.". So I got him on my back, and the bullets were flying in every direction. So I got winded and I said, "I'll have to have a blow." He says, "Alright," so I picked him up and I could only go a few yards farther when I was winded again. This lad, he had the guts of a lion. He said, "I don't know who the hell you are," he said, "I can't see. But," he said, "if you stay with me to the dressing station," he says, "I can crawl." That's how I got him to the dressing station. The poor devil crawled.

BAGSHAW, F.B.:
5th Btn.

As we came through Ypres, I remember distinct as can be there was a dog barking. It was the only sound we could hear. One of our fellows wanted to go in and release that dog and the Sergeant Major wouldn't let him.

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L.:

5th Btn.

The town was completely abandoned. The Cloth Hall was badly smashed. The whole town of Ypres was smashed to smithereens. There were a lot of dead horses, dogs, and some people, all bloated up, lying around. And I remember a chap named Wynn and I got a bag of wine and liquor, a sand bag and filled that with liquor and we had just got into the small square on our way back to our trench when a salvo of shells came over and we hit the deck, and we only had two bottles left. Smashed the whole darn works.

NARRATOR:

The Battles of Ypres were to continue for three more weeks but only the Canadian Divisional Artillery remained in position attached to the British Division holding the line between Mouse-Trap and Turco Farms and the P.P.C.L.I. serving with the British 80th Brigade, 27th Division, on Frezenburg Ridge. Here the Germans made one last great effort on May 8th.

SCOTT, Louis:

PPCLI

On the morning of May the 8th we suddenly saw that the Germans had advanced and had taken up the position on the top of the hill facing us. We saw silhouetted through an open building an officer in the old-time helmet with field glasses sizing up our situation. Our Vickers-Maxim gun, of which we only had one, opened fire with disastrous results. It brought down immediately a whole crash of artillery on us, and from then on the battle waged. After a severe bombardment which depleted our very frail trenches and destroyed 75% of our personnel, the Germans advanced over the hill.

NIVEN, H.:

PPCLI

We were good shots; we were veterans. And they only got within about a hundred yards of us when we had them going back. So then they started shelling again. Five times during the day artillery shelled our position. Each time they took a certain number of casualties. Hamilton Gault was very badly hit, hit twice in the morning. He sent word to Agar Adamson to take charge but Agar was hit and I was the Adjutant. I was still a Lieutenant, but I had to take command and I remained in command for the rest of the day. The Germans made

(CONT)

NIVEN, H.:(CONT)

four separate attacks. They had swept past our left and they had swept past our right and we were isolated completely. We had four machine guns. They were buried three or four times during the day with the shell fire. But they were always dug out. At the end of the day we had two left of the four. But we had really been trained in the fifteen rounds rapid fire. We were getting off the fifteen rounds a minute and the Germans thought they were machine guns, and they were rifles. I went round gathering up ammunition from the killed and giving to the fellows who were still alive.

HETHERINGTON, H.G.:
PPCLI

I fired rifle after rifle until they were really actually too hot to hold. There was no difficulty picking out a cool rifle because they were lying all around one. They were coming in masses because I was aiming at Germans for hours that morning. There was always a target to aim at. The front line went because that was blown away. That was inevitable but the reserve line never gave way and we were relieved in that same reserve line that night.

NIVEN, H.:
PPCLI

I had been told to retire, that the 27th Division couldn't help me, that they couldn't get up to me and they couldn't give me any support, and it was just madness to stay there, and I wrote back and said that I had too many wounded. We had no stretcher bearers to take out the wounded and I wouldn't go and leave them. So then they sent for me and I had to go back about, oh about a mile, to talk to the Divisional Commander and tell him that I wouldn't go back. I wouldn't retire. I was only a Lieutenant but no General in the British Army could make me go back without what was left. So we stuck it out. Ludendorff in his book gave tremendous credit to this regiment that were defending this position. They couldn't go this way or they couldn't go that way because they would be enfiladed by the P.P.C.L.I. He says there was some five thousand casualties.

McLAREN, Jack:
PPCLI

Bellewaarde Ridge, that was known as "The Grave of the Originals" - the recorded casualties of the Patricias on May 8th in 1915, were three hundred and ninety-two. Between April 22nd and May 8th, 1915, seven hundred were killed, wounded or missing in action.

NARRATOR:

The heroic performance of the Canadians in the Battles of Ypres in April, 1915, attracted world-wide attention in the Press and won them hundreds of front page columns of the most extravagant praise. We could quote some of them here, but in the interest of a more temperate accuracy here is an assessment by four men who fought at Ypres and take one last backward look.

ODLUM, V.W.:

We mustn't boast too much because it wasn't heroism that made us stay there and fight through that battle. We just did not know how to get out. We were out at the end of the Salient. Everything was happening and we couldn't get information. The only thing to do as far as we could see was just stay where we were. And we did.

GREEN, Elliot:
4 Div. Arty.

As somebody has said, that if they were better troops they would have withdrawn immediately and if they'd been worse troops, they wouldn't be there at all - they'd have panicked.

PATRICK, George:
2nd Btn.

No one had any idea of getting out. We didn't know enough about it to know that we were licked. We went in there and we were going to stay there, and that was that. Enough of us managed to stay there long enough until help come up to fill the gap.

JEFFERY, J.:
13th Btn.

I've never seen such marvellous men in all my life. They adjusted themselves to anything. It would be difficult to pick out any man for bravery, because they were all brave. I expected to see panic. There was no thought of panic. There was a job coming along and they just knuckled down to it, and really they were marvellous.

NARRATOR: Next week, Chapter Six of "FLANDERS' FIELDS", titled "A WORLD OF STEALTH". This Chapter will tell a story of the war at night, of No Man's Land and the development, by Canadians, of the trench raid. Next week: "A WORLD OF STEALTH".

ANNOUNCER: The first-person accounts of WORLD WAR I were researched, arranged and edited under the direction of Frank Lalor.

 The series, originated by A. E. Powley, is written, narrated, and produced by J. Frank Willis.

ANNOUNCER:

Ladies and Gentlemen: continuing "FLANDERS' FIELDS", the chronicle of Canada's Expeditionary Force in the Great War, the CBC presents today Chapter Six, "A WORLD OF STEALTH", being an account of the Battles of Festubert and Givenchy; of life in the trenches and of the war at night, of No Man's Land and the dread trench raid.

"FLANDERS' FIELDS", Chapter Six, "A WORLD OF STEALTH".

NARRATOR:

For the Canadian First Division the second Battle of Ypres ended on May 3rd, 1915. They had held the line in the Salient against an enemy who employed a superior number of Infantry supported by a preponderance of heavy artillery and machine guns but who, nevertheless, failed to exploit the paralyzing surprise of the first gas attack --- a great potential advantage that could never be repeated.

The Canadians had held the line; but at a fearful price. The First Division, from the 15th of April to the 3rd of May, lost 208 officers and 5828 other ranks. The P.P.C.L.I. who were in action some 18 days longer, from April 10th to May 21st, suffered 678 casualties. Men of the Second Division were already filling the gaps, the first of thousands more to come in a seeming endless procession that would stretch on to November of 1918.

Jack Pinson of the 7th Battalion was among those first reinforcements.

PINSON, Jack:
7th Btn.

On the 1st of May 1915 we proceeded across from Folkestone to the 7th Battalion. They were just getting regrouped after the big gas attack at Ypres a week before, and you can imagine with us young fellows coming in there, all green troops, that we were all goggle-eyed looking at these old-timers who had been there about two months before us.

MAIDEN, F.:
10th Btn.

We saw a horse ambulance coming down past us, a little cockney chap sitting on the back step. His whole head was bandaged up. He was an awful looking mess. We were singing at the top of our voices, "Are we down-hearted?" And this little voice came in broad cockney, "No, but you bloody soon will be."

ORMOND, D.M.:

There were more newcomers than there were old-timers. Eventually they called the old-timers the 'Jeezlies', you see, because they thought they were better than the newcomers. But that was all over by the time that I returned because they lost another five hundred the 19th to the 21st of June.

NARRATOR:

Ten days only to recover from the battle fatigue of Ypres, to bring up reinforcements, regroup and hit the road south foot-slogging to Festubert.

ALLEY, H.R.:
3rd Btn.

You had to pull people out, give them a few days sleep, feed them up a bit, and send them straight back into battle again. We just hadn't any men. All through 1915 you were on a shoe-string, and a pretty frayed shoe-string at that.

NARRATOR:

At this time the British First Army was desperately short of troops. To relieve the French 58th on the British right between the La Bassée Canal and Festubert, despite the fact that the Canadian Artillery was still in action at Ypres and Ploegsteert --- and the Infantry was either aching still from Ypres or green, untried replacements.

ODLUM, V.W.:

We got down there after a considerable march, a march that had a spectacular feature to it. Our men were pretty well done in, and marching through the night, they were tired. The spirit was out of them. A battalion Band came out and met us on the road and they played us past and the change in the Battalion - just with that music, nothing else - was tremendous. They re-formed, they marched in step - they just became a living battalion again and from that time on to this I have never forgotten the fact that music is one of the most important things you can have when men are suffering and down.

SINCLAIR, Ian:
13th Btn.

I remember the march to the battle. It was springtime and France was beautiful and we were living in little billets on farms with apple trees and peaches and pears around us and it was just heaven, particularly to soldiers. Then we got up to a place called Paradise which was literally that. And from there we went straight up into the Battle of Festubert and took over first trenches which had been occupied by the Scotch Fusiliers.

NARRATOR:

The Battle of Festubert had, as its ultimate objective, La Bassée but the action did not go well from the outset. The Canadian Third Brigade was to occupy a section of the original German line known as the North Breastwork. General Haig's orders were late in coming. A two-hour artillery barrage was a full hour late in starting and largely wasted on positions from which the enemy had moved. Newly positioned German machine guns stopped the Brigade of Guards fighting next to the Canadians who could not begin their frontal assault until 5.25 P.M.

BREWER, H.G.:
14th Btn.

We occupied German trenches when we went in. They were good trenches although they were facing the wrong way. We attacked the next day in broad daylight, and we were an undisciplined mob. Our men weren't trained to keep their proper distance in extended order, and the leaders were not trained, and the result was that our casualties

(CONT)

BREWER, H.G.:(cont)

were very heavy. We were passing the Guards. They were dug in in little ditches and they were calling to us to spread out and extend. They were horrified and the terrain there was full of cross ditches, very deep, and the only way to cross them was either to go down and wade through or go over little planks and, of course we all bunched up and went over the plank bridges which was a perfect target for the enemy artillery and they were using a lot of shrapnel. We went ahead and dug in there again. We'd dig slit trenches parallel to the enemy, six feet apart or so, and then we'd gradually join these up.

OLDAKER, H.H.:
14th

We made good progress until we came up close to that orchard. And there was a huge ditch which we couldn't possibly cross. And Major Rae who was in command of the 16th attack, he halted the troops there and sent word back to Battalion that we couldn't possibly advance any farther.

JOHNSON, C.J.:
14th

We went out that night and tried to make a trench about halfway between the two lines, and we came back just around daybreak. They threw high explosives at us all morning and we had orders not to get in the German dugouts, but some of them did get into them and we lost quite a few that morning. They had the range right down to a science.

NARRATOR:

As a matter of record the German accounts show full credit going to their artillery for stopping the Canadians. Of the 3rd Brigade they say "They encountered such an effective barrage that the attack collapsed after a few minutes and was not again renewed."

But during the night of May 18 - 19, the 2nd Canadian Brigade took over positions on the 3rd Brigade's right and on May 20th at 3.00 P.M., the two Canadian Brigades in the line were ordered to assault at 7.45 P.M. The Second Brigade was to take an enemy position known only as K.5., while the 3rd Brigade would secure a half mile of the German front line and capture a setting of

(CONT)

NARRATOR:(CONT)

fruit trees at the east end of the north breastwork that would become known as "The Canadian Orchard".

McLENNAN, A.M.:
16th

The orchard was very heavily fortified with machine guns and so on, and there was a nasty wide ditch. You could call it a moat, about seven foot wide. And there was just two narrow planks that led into it. There was very little protection there for troops above ground. It was a flat field and there was only just the shell holes and ditches and what have you. Well, we went up under our own barrage and got up to the orchard and got the better of them. And that became known as Canadian Orchard for the rest of the war.

NARRATOR:

The Second Brigade's assault on K.5. was doomed to failure before it started. Brigadier General Currie had been unable to identify K.5., a small circle on the trench maps of the Festubert sector, maps which were later proven to be full of inaccuracies with positions shown as much as 450 yards astray and the whole thing printed upside down.

COX, Sid.:
10th

We took the wrong place to begin with. It was a mix-up at night. We didn't get the objective we went after. We had gone to the left. Well, then, what made it so bad for us, then after that was the British were going to shell this other place which we were to take in the next step, and they took our communication line out with the first shot and we couldn't get anybody back because Fritzie opened up then and we had to take it there all that day, both sides pounding us.

GREENE, Elliot:
4 Div. Arty.

At Festubert there was no use having a forward observing officer with wire up to the infantry because the maps were all cockeyed. They were not only laid out facing south, but they were inaccurate, probably as much as four hundred and fifty yards difference between the reality on the ground and the map.

NARRATOR:

The 2nd Brigade's assault on K.5. was made by two companies of the 10th Battalion. The first moving to the left over 200 yards of open ground was cut to pieces by machine gun fire. The second, going to the right, forced the enemy out of 400 yards of his front line and beat off successive counter-attacks through the night.

With the coming of dawn on the 22nd German artillery concentrated a pulverizing bombardment on their lost position, blowing the breastworks away and wiping out the occupants.

COX, Sid.:
10th

They were coming down this trench. They were trying to infiltrate down, but we'd just keep firing until they had the dead piled up all over the place. They were in the open. We could get at them. We really murdered them for a while but we were running out of ammunition. We had no food. We had no water. They shelled the daylights out of us. I don't know how many hours it kept up, but they really let us have it. The only thing that saved us, we were just in front of it. It was hitting behind us most of the time. As soon as they'd shell us, and the attack would drop back we would move again. We wouldn't stay put because we'd found out the minute they pin-point you you are a goner.

NARRATOR:

Before mid-day of the 22nd Currie withdrew his men from all but 100 yards of the newly occupied line. By then the 10th Battalion had lost 18 officers and 250 other ranks.

COX, Sid.:
10th

Some artillery fellows came up with trench mortars and blew the Germans back enough for us to get out so that when we ran and jumped they weren't right under rifle fire. We were able to work down through these shell holes and things and work out way out. We must have

(CONT)

COX, Sid.:(cont)

gone back a mile, and that is where we found that we had no backing. There wasn't a soldier behind us anywhere. And our reserves, who were British troops behind us, they pulled them back for some unknown reason. Gee we were mad! We thought we had been let down badly.

NARRATOR:

But on the night of the 23rd-24th the Second Brigade returned to the assault on a sector of 3000 yards, from the Canadian Orchard southeast to Givenchy-Lez-La Bassée.

This time there had been opportunity for careful reconnaissance and detailed preparation.

At 2.30 A.M. two companies of the 5th Battalion, led by a party of 30 bombers, attacked with the Battle Cry of "Lusitania".

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L.:
5th

K.5. was a sort of redoubt, a very strong position the Germans were in, and it was strengthened by the fact that a little river ran through between our trenches and theirs that was very deep, about 10 feet wide from bank to bank. We had to bridge that in order to get across it. And our trenches were fairly close to it and so were theirs and you couldn't bridge it in daylight without getting shot. I was in one of the parties that had to go and put the bridges across and by the time we got going it was breaking day and they saw us, and we lost a lot of our bridge parties and a lot of the bridges didn't get across at all. The man in charge of that party, Malcolm Smith, in the broad daylight he went and checked and jumped on every damn one of those bridges himself to make damn sure they would hold. With the whole German army shooting at him, he never got hit. He should have had a V.C.

BAGSHAW, F.B.:
5th

At midnight without any warning or preparation or any plan of attack or practise, we marched out in the darkness of the night, not knowing where we were going and what we had to do. We came back with one officer and I think we must have lost something like two hundred and fifty of our five hundred men.

BOWYER, J.H.:
5th Btn.

During the operation I was placed in charge of the entrance to a communication trench leading to K. 5. and told to stay there and direct any reinforcements, show them the way up. And the enemy kept shelling this entrance to this trench unmercifully, and there was fourteen men knocked out while I was there.

COPPING, E.N.:
5th Btn.

"A" Company were on the right and I was standing next to a chap from Winnipeg and, as we came to the open, he was shot right through the head, just went down like that. And we of course dropped down. Tennay joined us, was wounded, and sort of lay crippled there, but was still giving instruction. He sent me and half a dozen other fellows into a little redoubt called K. 5. So I shot into this dugout and there was a German in there. Well, I tied up his wounds and sat him up and took his picture - I had a camera, and I still have that picture.

NARRATOR:

Suddenly, and with no change to reconnoitre, the 7th Battalion was ordered to go to the aid of the 5th.

ODLUM, V.W.:

General Currie said, "You are to attack from K.5." I said, "What is K.5?" We had no maps. He said, "I don't know." There was no information and again we had to go into the blue and try to attack from K. 5., which was not a distinguishable position.

It was a spot that somebody had put on a map. It was another one of these operations where confusion was the main feature. We didn't have a chance to go out and make any reconnaissance. We just marched down and went in. Our losses were very heavy.

PINSON, Jack:
7th

We went in as a complete platoon, fifty-four of us, at nine o'clock at night. It was very quiet till about daylight in the morning, when woosh-wham- The next shell that came over hit the parapet and covered us with dirt and sandbags and everything else. Well, that was just the start. He bombarded us all that day with anything up to 15-inch shells and he made a shambles of us. We lost two thirds of the platoon, killed and wounded, just in that bombardment.

NARRATOR: The positions along the eastern hedge of the Canadian Orchard represented the farthest advance of the British First Army in the Battle of Festubert. To Sanctuary in the ruined orchard the remnants of the 5th Battalion withdrew to count their casualties.

BAGSHAW, F.B.:
5th

After being brought out worn and tired we lay down in the orchard, you see, and the adjutant, he said, "Bagshaw, you'd better have a parade and see who is missing." So I attempted a muster parade in the orchard. Ken Campbell was the senior sergeant there, and while I was doing this Ken burst into tears and presently all the fellows around, fellows that I never suspected of the slightest sentiment broke down and wept bitterly when names would be called out and no answer.

NARRATOR: When the P.P.C.L.I. moved to France in December of 1914 and the First Division followed in February of '15, they left behind in England the Cavalry Brigade. The frustrating months that followed were just about unbearable to high-spirited young men who had joined up with romantic notions of charging enemy positions with brandished sabres.

Now with the need for reinforcements in France becoming desperate they faced an unexpected situation --

KING, E.A.:
R.C.D.

The Canadian Cavalry Brigade volunteered to go over there as infantry. General Seeley wouldn't consent to breaking us up and sending us as reinforcements to the infantry, but he said, "We'll take over an infantry front." And he formed us into a hollow square and told us that he had volunteered the brigade to go over there and take over part of the line. He said, "Any man that doesn't want to volunteer step forward." But there wasn't a single one stepped forward. Well, that afternoon the infantry equipment came down to the Quartermaster Stores, and by midnight that night we were on the boat going from Folkestone to Boulogne.

NARRATOR: Unlike other Canadian troops who had had weeks of indoctrination in the line before their first big battle, the cavalry marched right into the thick of it, as bloody Festubert was ending.

FRASER, Norman:
LSHG

Going into Festubert the first thing that happened, we were going through the village and a shell lit in among the buildings. And there was dead silence. We'd come to a blockade in the road and we were halted there. And we were shocked, you know. This shell lit. We thought we were all killed. And somebody laughed. And that was it. Then we started to move again.

JACOBS, A.G.:
LSHG

We'd had very little elementary training of any kind and we'd had no infantry training, absolutely none at all and when we went in we were led right up to the wrong trench and we were led back in the middle of the night on a road between the front line trench and the second line trench, and after a while a Very light went up and lit us all up. And this old soldier who had been a scout in Africa, he said, "Follow me you fellows", and he led us off the road and we waited. And then down the road came shells, you see. Heinie had seen us. Where our section had been a shell landed square bang in it. Rob had saved the whole section just because he was an old soldier who knew better.

FRASER, Norman:
LSHG

I tell you one reaction I had. Before we left England we had bayonet practise. They had dummies and we would charge these dummies and we would stick our bayonets in and put our foot on their chest and pull the bayonet out, and I dreaded the thought of sticking a bayonet in a man. When we got up going into the line and met the boys coming out, some of them being led with bandages over their eyes, blind, and others just barely able to navigate, I lost all that dread and I was just itching for a chance to get my bayonet into one of the so-and-sos.

KING, E.A.:
R.C.D.

We stayed in the reserve trenches that night, and the next morning we were sent up to the front line to K.5. The parapet of K.5. was practically composed of dead German corpses. In the attack of the previous day they had no time to fill sandbags. So they just picked the corpses up, laid them one on top of the other, and the stench was something terrible.

JACOBS, A.G.:

LSHG

Mr. McDonald of my unit went to the help of the unit that was doing the attack and, without orders, attacked across and got wounded himself. He wanted to take two troops across and, oh, he couldn't do that without orders so he said to the other troop leader, "Go and ask the Squadron Leader if we can do it." As soon as the other troop officer was gone he told the troop sergeant, "Get ready, we're going." Well the Troop Sergeant did what he was told and off he went. Incidentally, he was the Junior Lieutenant in the Regiment.

LAYTON, E.G.:

LSHG

All night Fritzie kept up tremendous rifle fire, and I've never forgot it. Came out a beautiful spring morning. One of these English meadowlarks came up singing to beat the band right up in No Man's Land. And he'd hardly got away when the Germans opened up with everything. Bombarded us all day. And I often wonder if that poor lark there hit a shell or got through.

NARRATOR:

The Battle of Festubert had not gone well and Sir John French ordered it broken off. A reorganization of the first Army's front followed with the 1st Canadian Division moving to the right and taking over the Givenchy Sector. Now in dry trenches the Canadians enjoyed a brief respite from heavy fighting.

PINSON, Jack:

7th

The next trip we made up the line was what we called the Duck's Bill at Givenchy. That was close along the La Bassée Canal just a little northeast of Béthune. That area was only twenty yards between the German trench and ours. Well after the trouncing we got at Festubert you can imagine our feelings going up that close to this fellow that could do that to us, and every step closer to that front line our knees were knocking just that much more. We were scared, there's no question about it, but we had to go through with it. When we got up there to the Duck's Bill it was the safest place in the line. We were so close together that he couldn't shell us and we couldn't shell him.

PATRICK, George:
2nd

The British had decided they were going to cut off a little salient that the Germans were occupying and, in order to do that, they constructed a mine underneath the German front line. The 2nd Battalion wasn't actually involved in the attack. The 1st Battalion did the attack through our lines. But we were in the position when the mine was blown up. They brought up a field gun in pieces and erected it right behind our position, and in the afternoon, I think about six o'clock, they finally blew the mine. And the 1st Battalion went over. Well they were very badly slaughtered and nothing was gained. In about an hour or an hour and a half what was left of the 1st Battalion was back in our line again.

NARRATOR:

On the 24th of June the First Canadian Division began to move northward from Givenchy some seventeen miles to the Ploegsteert sector three miles north of Armentières. Here in "Plug Street", as the soldiers called it, they would hold 4400 yards of front line toward Messines and sit out the summer in a strange and unaccustomed tranquility. There was plenty of time for taking stock.

McGOWAN, M.C.:
1st Btn.

At the beginning of the War there was very little science in it as far as modern war is concerned. In fact, I don't think anybody knew exactly what they were doing. They were trying to operate in the old South African war style. You must remember that the 1st Division as far as the Canadian forces were concerned, were the experimental dogs for the remainder.

NARRATOR:

And time to brood on shortages. We were woefully short of weapons especially machine guns. The consensus was that the Ross Rifle added up to a total loss and as for that indispensable fighting tool of the Infantry, the hand grenade --

HETHERINGTON, H.G.:
PPCLI

It was an ordinary half-pound jam tin. You took off the lid and fitted a wooden plug to the top. Then you filled it up with horseshoe nails and anything like that that you could find, and a big charge of the best explosive you could get hold of. And in this wooden plug you bored a hole in the top and you pushed an ordinary commercial detonator through into it, to which you put the usual piece of short fuse and then you lighted it and judging the time it took your fuse to burn through, you threw it away and hoped that it landed in the enemy trench. But it was all very difficult and I don't think you'd ever hurt anybody very much.

NARRATOR:

All British troops suffered from this lack of machine guns, grenades and mortars but the Canadians had a problem uniquely Canadian, the Ross Rifle.

Although this weapon had been detested and complained against by all ranks since training days on Salisbury Plain; thrown away in favor of the more efficient Lee Enfield by every man who had an opportunity, it was, for two long years, uncompromisingly defended by Sir Sam Hughes against repeated and well-supported charges of unsatisfactory performance in the field.

The Minister of Militia's stubbornness on this issue failed to endear him to the fighting men who would face situations where the efficiency of their weapon meant the difference between life and death.

SPENCER, D.D.:
R.C.R.

It was the most accurate rifle in the world. There wasn't a rifle to touch it, because the records at Bisley say that. Clifford, in 1911, won everything there and it's a Canadian record that I don't suppose will ever be broken by anybody, and it was achieved with a Ross Rifle.

ALLEY, H.R.:
3rd

It was an exceedingly accurate rifle if you could take your time to shoot at one man at about 500 yards. It wasn't worth a hoot if you were dealing with a battalion of Germans at 200 yards. With rapid fire over any lengthy period, say three or four minutes, the darn thing would get heated up so that you couldn't open the bolt. You simply couldn't reload it.

SCRIVEN, C.:
10th

I laid in a shell hole with four other men for a day and a half and a night in between and, out of five Ross Rifles in that hole, it took four of us to keep one of them working, banging the bolts out. As soon as you fired a round you had to sit her down and take the entrenching tool handle to bash the bolt out, to get it out before you could load it again. When we came out I don't think there was a half a dozen Ross Rifles in our outfit. We had picked up the rifles of wounded Imperial men that we had been with in that area, and we all had a short Lee Enfield; and then we were all ordered to turn them in and they issued the Rosses again.

NARRATOR:

It was not until 1916 that Sam Hughes at last relented and allowed all the Canadian units to be equipped with Lee Enfield Rifles. A decision forced on him by the British Army Council supporting a recommendation of the Commander-in-Chief.

As Festubert and Givenchy had amply demonstrated, the Infantry not only lacked weapons of their own, they lacked supporting weapons. In 1915 artillery guns and shells were in woefully short supply.

MACDONNELL, J.M.:
4 Div. Arty.

We were conscious of the fact that there was a great shortage of ammunition and that we had to husband it in every way we could. We had a thick file of correspondence in our battery because one high explosive shell had been fired without proper authority. A common joke was that we had three rounds per day per gun, perhaps.

LEACH, R.J.:
Arty Corps

You might have your own six rounds or four rounds per day to do what you like with but normally what happened was that certainly either the Brigade Headquarters or the Divisional Artillery Commander just kept it in hand. He might take all of that and give it to one battery, or he might save it all up for a week. It was murder. At times the Hun was just throwing ammunition over and you just sat there and couldn't do anything.

NARRATOR:

Some batteries found ways and means to remedy the situation and the word "scrounge" entered the language.

COSGROVE, L.V.M.:
1 Div. Arty.

I had some of the best thieves on the Canadian front. There was one chap from the Maritime Provinces. He was my star. He could disappear off with about half a dozen limbers and come back loaded with absolutely good ammunition. He'd come in to some poor little ammunition dump, you see, and flurried some sort of a bit of paper that said we want so many, 200 rounds of this, 400 rounds of 18-pounders, and so on. "Yes, Sir." They piled all this in. He'd write out a receipt over there with some God-awful name and hand it over. Back he'd come with his ammunition. I never asked him where he got it. Didn't dare!

NARRATOR:

In the Fall of 1915 the men of the 1st Division and the Cavalry Brigade were joined by the 2nd Canadian Division. The Canadian Corps was formed. By the Spring of 1916 a Third Division had moved into the line beside them to share the life of the trenches, a way of life that would last for three more years. What was it like, this world of the trenches? Gregory Clark calls it "A World of stealth."

CLARK, Gregory:
4 CMR

Suddenly you entered this strange mysterious unearthly land of stealth waving and weaving across Belgium and down through France, over hill and valley and plain and river, never changing, day and night, week after month

(CONT)

CLARK, Gregory:(CONT)

after year, this ribbon of stealth in which no man moved or spoke loudly. And in that stealth, millions of men - British, French, German, Americans, every nationality lived years of their lives. There were shots. There were sounds. There was the distant sound of the gun firing. There was the weird unearthly howling of shells. There would be the crack and explosion of shells. There would be strange meaningless rifle shots, random unassociated bursts of machine gun. These sounds, in this stealth, only accentuated it, and gave it a more unearthly and slightly lunatic sense. This land of stealth went through towns, villages, but mostly through farm fields, abandoned, and of course running wild with turnips, wheat that had gone to seed, a weird tangle. You would think that it would've been alive with game, but no, there were no birds in that land of stealth. Now and again, a hare or a rabbit would lop through but even it knew that something dreadful was wrong. There was nothing in it except rats, by the countless millions. Wherever you went, in the daylight, at night, the whole place squeaking and squealing with these huge and monstrous rats, living on this garbage of our trenches and living on what had been buried there by the French before us. That added that last mad feature.

ROSS, Alex.:

We went into the line in the sector in the front of Kemmel Hill. When we took over the trenches they seemed to be very nice trenches but of course they were situated on the east slope of Wytschaete Ridge, and when the fall and winter rains came our trenches almost disappeared. We were left naked to the world for a while and so we had to start in the winter to reconstruct practically the whole line.

BAIN, G.E.:
31st

It was a very quiet winter. Actually we fought the weather, not the Germans. The trenches in the Ypres Salient were actually not trenches, they were barricades because the moment you went down about two shovels deep the water came in. And as the weather got bad and the snow came and the rain came, the trenches gradually sluffed in.

COUSINS, A.R.:
21st

There was a bit of a creek ran through their line and through ours and the Germans they plugged it up, kept it back of their line for a while and made quite a pool out of it, and then let it out, and it came over and flooded our trenches for about a couple of hundred yards. And they painted a fence canvas and we set that up where the sand bags were, you see, overnight to try and make the Germans think that we'd built a new trench.

CLARK, Gregory:
4 CMR

The normal routine in those trench warfare days that lasted three out of the four years, a battalion would be given its sector by brigade. It would go up and take over this 300 yard or 400 yard piece of trench, and it would put two companies in the front line and they would be in six days. Then they would be moved back six days into the immediate support trench. Then the whole battalion would move back six days into the main support trench and supply working parties, and carrying parties, trench digging parties, wiring parties, burying parties, to the battalions in the front line. That meant eighteen days in this world of stealth, and then six days out at the wagon lines at the village which was your base. Six days to bathe and refit and do a little drilling and try to be soldiers again, instead of a strange sort of pre-historic man, and that's what they were - Troglodytes!

SCRIVEN, C.:
10th Btn.

I think the first two years that we put in France was about the hardest and the toughest part of that war. You see we had no trenches to start off with. We had no duckboards to stand on. And at that time we were building trenches, building fortifications, building barbed wire protection in front, and all this kind of work was going on all the time. If you weren't fighting you were working.

CLARK, Gregory:
4 CMR

They speak of trenches. Trenches is too romantic a name. These were ditches, common ordinary ditches. As time went by they became filthy. We had no garbage disposal, no sewage disposal. You would dig a little trench off the main trench, dig a deep hole and that was your latrine. You threw everything you didn't want out over the parapet or the parados. And if you stood ever at a place where, with powerful binoculars, you could look at the trenches you saw this sort of strange line of garbage heap wandering up hill and down dale as far as the eye could see, and in that setting men lived as if it were the way men should live, year after year.

ORMOND, D.M.:

In September of '15 the Guards Brigade were the first people to put in real trenches on the British front. Well then I think probably the Canadians were the next. What you mean by a trench for siege warfare is something that a man can walk along standing upright. When the material was available in a wet area they put in what we call a duckwalk along the bottom. Then you had what was called a fire-step on the enemy side so that the men, to use their rifles, could step up a foot to eighteen inches

(CONT)

ORMOND, D.M.: (CONT) and fire over the parapet. The parapet would be somewhat lower than the parapet and the top of the trench would average from four feet to six feet wide. The trenches were made so that three or four men could stand side by side and each have a couple of yards. Well then you would put a projection out so that if a shell burst in one of these what we called a bay the side blast would be stopped by these projections. Well then off this trench you had things that were called dugouts or bivvies or what have you, and they were made of anything that the troops could liberate, the doors from smashed-up houses, the wood from stables, all that sort of thing. And then they put sandbags on top of that and if you got one layer of sandbags on top it would stop shell fragments and shrapnel and rifle grenades.

SCRIVEN, C.:
10th

We used to lug rations or water as far as ten, fifteen miles at night and when you figure on carrying your equipment - no matter what job you went on, you took your equipment - and then, on top of that, two cans of water or else a box of ammunition sitting on the back of your neck, three or four loads of biscuits or bully beef or something else you got to lug up the line, there wasn't anything easy or cinchy about it.

CLARK, Gregory:
4 CMR

You could sometimes hear the give-away sound of wagon wheels far off on a summer night, and that's where your boys were picking up our rations. About four miles back behind this strange world of stealth, back over a hill or behind a height of land, in some wrecked village, was the horse lines. This was where your wagons and the regiment's own rear details, rear orderly rooms, records, assistant adjutant, quartermaster, transport officer lived in battered-up billets or something, and every night at dusk the wagons would leave that semi-normal country of ruin and wreckage and lice and mud. They would creepily venture into this land of stealth to a pre-arranged spot where our nightly carrying parties, so many men from each company, having left the trenches and crept down the zig-zag communication trenches, would come to this rendezvous, meet the wagons, and even the wagons tried to move with stealth.

ACKERLY, P.:
42nd

There were no proper cooking arrangements. You had to do the best you could over a small burner or canned heat. As time went on the trenches were improved, the dugouts were made deeper. You have better facilities in the deep dugouts for doing your own cooking.

CLARK, Gregory:

4 CMR

In the dugouts, on each company front, down in the worst smelling of all the dugouts was set the company cook with his dixies, and periodically the boys on duty in the trenches would be called and they would come down with their little mess tins and get this dreadful food. Your bread was always plastered and covered with jute hairs. Rations came up in sandbags. Bully beef came up. This was our great staple. MacConachies ration, a dreadful thing with about a quarter of an inch of gray grease on the top when you turned the key on it. When you think of the food!

NARRATOR:

The strength of the human race rests in its capacity to adapt itself to any conditions and find a way to survive.

And human ingenuity will triumph over even the most abject boredom. Here is one way ----

SECORD, Harry:

18th

One of the chaps got a copy of this TP's Weekly, this little English weekly publication and there was something in there about any soldier who wished to get correspondents in England would have an advertisement published free of charge in this paper -- a sort of a Lonely Hearts Club. So these two lads wrote out an ad, "Two young refined Canadian soldiers wish to mitigate the ennui of trench life by corresponding with nice British girls." The ad went in and letters came from all over Scotland and England and Wales. And one of these lads worked it all out scientifically. He had a little diary, all in alphabetical order, and if a girl were eighteen years of age, he was twenty and if she was thirty, he was thirty-five, and so on, and he fitted his civilian occupation to correspond with their standing in life. So Christmas came around and the signal section, of which I was a member, got as many parcels as the rest of the Battalion put together. We all wrote to a few of them. Well then, after Christmas, he got rather fed up and he was wondering how to get rid of these girls, because he'd proposed to a few of them, so he got an Irishman in the unit to write a letter to all these persistent ladies and say that poor Jimmy had paid the supreme sacrifice and, in fact, he'd just come back from putting some flowers on his grave, so the correspondence then petered out.

NARRATOR: The Christmas of 1915 was the first Christmas in the line for all the Canadian troops except the originals of the P.P.C.L.I.

MASON, D.H.C.:
3rd

We moved into the line in a thunderstorm on Christmas Eve, and Christmas morning broke clear and everybody full of Christmas cheer, and the messages kept coming in from everybody from the King down, you see, wishing us all a Merry Christmas. Then there was some fraternizing between the lines which had the inevitable end that some people got shot, you see, and it broke up. There were a dozen or two Germans out there and perhaps nearly as many of our men, for a few minutes, and then of course somebody opened fire. I was a Company Commander at that time with a very happy little family of three subalterns, and when this fraternizing happened, one of the men killed was the best friend of one of my subalterns, and one of the others got a letter from his best girl to say that she was engaged to an American. The third one discovered he was sickening for 'flu. What a gorgeous Xmas!

WHITEMAN, H.H.:
14th

The Germans wouldn't fire on us and we wouldn't fire on them. It was Christmas Day to us all and, despite the fact that the officers didn't approve of this, we insisted upon it. We got on top of the trenches and dangled our legs and then we talked to them. Some of them could speak English. I held up a tin of bully beef, and they were crazy about this bully beef of ours, you know. And one of the lads in the flank, there was a hedge running to their line, and he crept along the hedge there, and he took my bully beef and his own bully beef and they sent back some blood pudding. We sang and they sang and they cheered us and we cheered them. It was a great day!

NARRATOR: And an exceptional one - although there were no great battles throughout that long wet winter, they were always aware that just a stone's throw away the enemy lay in wait and worked for their destruction.

FINDLATER, A.:
31st

It was a very quiet front, very quiet indeed, but we had heard sounds at night, underground tapping, and had reported it and, although our engineers were mining towards the German trenches, the Germans were also undermining us. A little later on there was a terrific explosion in the front line. Our relieving battalion, the 28th from Saskatchewan, were in the line and they just wiped out an entire company of the 28th battalion.

ROSS, Alex.:

We lost quite a number of men but we did not lose any ground. Our people were fortunately on the job, and he did not gain any advantage by it. But it was our first baptism of fire really. We had to be on the alert for mines all the time. They would start quite a way back and then drift a tunnel until they came under your line. Then they'd pack it with explosives and then when they are ready they'd press a button and away she goes and then they would generally, of course, have a party ready to move in and occupy the crater that's been blown. That is the theory.

NARRATOR:

The 28th were not the only battalion to be undermined by the Germans -- the 25th had their experiences too.

STALLARD, Sydney:
25th

We were pretty green. We didn't know what it meant. When the mine went up and the machine guns and the artillery opened up on us, some of them there got pretty windy, and one beat it down the roadway, what was called the V.C. road, where that crossed the trench. Well then we got orders to retire to the slits. Well the slits then was little trenches back of the front line. Well I saw the darn shells were dropping down there, and I said what's the good of going back there and get hit, so I stayed in the front line. And there was another one of the boys, he did the same thing. We both stood there you know, talking and looking around. The old machine guns was ripping and the artillery coming over. We didn't know what we were doing. We were just about as stupid as you could want anybody. Well afterwards there, when things quieted down, one of the boys came back, and he said he'd been hit with a sandbag. And every time a star shell went up he wanted to get over the top and get it, so we had to keep hauling him down and of course after about an hour we shipped him out, shell-shocked.

NARRATOR:

Normally the enemy made their presence felt in less dramatic fashion - especially at night. Apart from the great offensives the whole of the First World War was really a war of the night, in a world of stealth.

PHILPOTT, Elmore:
2 Div. Arty.

Very very rarely would we see any of the enemy except, of course at night. You saw the evidence of them, all these flares and lights going up, sort of an eerie thing. As far as you could see on both sides were all these lights going up, both sides shooting up these flares to keep the enemy from sneaking up on them.

MOORE, A.S.:
52nd

I was afraid the war would be over before I got there but the first night in the trenches with the thunder and lightning and the star shells going up, I was wishing to hell it had've been. I didn't know what I'd got into or what was going to happen. In fact, somebody came along and said, "We want somebody here for listening post", and I thought he said "Whistling post", and I put my hand up and I said, "I can whistle." I went out that night with one of the R.C.R. fellows on this listening post and he told me, "Now," he said, "whenever a star shell goes up, stand still with your head down." He said, "Don't flop". Well I want to tell you I flopped all the way out and all the way back. But I never ever volunteered again for listening post. In fact you didn't have to. After that they'd just tell you where you were going and what you were going to do.

STEVENS, Charles:
20th

When you have a listening post the idea is that you dig a sap straight out from your front line and as near to the German barbed wire as you can get. You post two men there and they're relieved at intervals and these two men, they're supposed to keep quiet and listen. If the Germans send out a working party to fix their wire they pull on a cord that rattles a stone in a tin back at the front line. Well when they do that you go out. Well, what did you bring me out here for? There's a working party to the right front. Are you sure? Well, just listen, you can hear them hammering in the stakes.

SPENCER, D.D.:
R.C.R.

You stayed there and that was your job, to watch everything of an unusual nature. You listened, because there you could tell whether men were digging, whether there was working parties coming up there, maybe to mine the place, or maybe it was a big concentration of troops, or wagon wheels, and everything like that, because sometimes that part that you thought was poorly manned suddenly becomes a citadel of great strength and this is eternally your job, to find out what's doing and to report it quickly. This is the acme of intelligence.

TURNER, Harris:
PPCLI

I remember one night we were in the trenches at Hooze, and I was the only man out of this particular end in the dark of the night holding the whole German army back. There was a break in the line. And I was standing there shivering and thinking, and Captain Stewart came along the trench. He said, "Good night, Sentry." I said, "Good night, Sir." He said, "Where are the Germans?" I said, "Oh, they're across there about two or three hundred yards." He said, "Have you seen any flashes over there?" I said, "No, sir." He said, "What makes you think they're there? I don't think there are any Germans over there. I think the trenches are empty." "Well," I said, "I think they're there, Sir." He said, "Well, we'll go and find out." "Well," I said, "If that's an order we'll go - if it's a suggestion we'll stay here." He said, "What's the matter, are you afraid to go?" I said, "Yes, Sir." He said, "Damn it, so am I. Good night, Sentry."

SPENCER, D.D.:
R.C.R.

One thing about the Canadian forces, they were restless. They never stood still, they were always out reconnoitering. They always wanted to know what was going on.

BRUTINEL, Raymond:

The Canadian Staff, regimental officers and specialists in all branches worked very hard to assimilate the lessons of the war they were then fighting. Brimful of initiative, almost entirely free of red tape, and of preconceived ideas, they were impatient of the conditions under which they were fighting, and they began to look for ways and means to break the stalemate locally. Canadian Infantry originated and perfected the raiding parties across No Man's Land, blasting the prevailing idea that the combination of trenches and barbed wire could not be overcome.

ODLUM, V.W.:

I organized that first raid. No man knows at the time when he's doing a thing of that sort that he's inventing anything at all. All I knew was this, that each night I would go up and talk with my men in the line and the men would always tell me what the Germans had been doing during the night. They came up onto our trench, climbed up the face of it. They moved about here, they moved about there. And so I said to my men, "I'm going to tell you something. What they have done we will do and a little bit more. If the Germans can come up onto our trenches we can go into theirs." That's where I started raiding.

Right across from us was a very strong position and I chose that as the one to attack, my judgment being based upon psychology. That would be the last place they would be worried about. Our preparations were very very complete. We practised for a long time on taped-out ground behind, and when they came to go and do it each man knew what he was going to do - he went and did it and came back. The night of the raid was a bright moonlight night but, fortunately for us, not too bright, and we sent a group of boys out with wirecutters. They lay on their backs, crept forward, and the wires being between them and the moonlit sky above, they could see the wires and cut the path through. And then our men, on the signal from the box barrage, fired by the artillery, they went on and went in. We had blackened faces. I went even so far as to get electric battery torches to fasten to each rifle, so that the men on pointing a rifle, touching the battery would blind the Germans. And it was a wonderful thing. We caught those Germans down in their dugouts because the shells were coming and our boys threw bombs down into them. How many were killed and hurt we never knew, but we know many were, and we brought away twelve quivering Germans as prisoners. We had no losses at all. Everything worked so easily and smoothly it was just amazing. The technique that we used in that raid was a technique that was carried on right through to the end.

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L. :
5th

Those raids were extremely effective. They did more to unnerve the enemy I think than the battles. The Canadians were ideal for raiding because they could improvise. The Germans couldn't carry out a raid unless they had everything organized. And if anything went wrong with the organization, why they panicked.

ROSS, Alex.:

The main purpose, of course, was to obtain information. It was always vital to Higher Command to know who was in front of us, where they'd come from, what they were doing and so on. So, periodically, we had to make a raid.

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L.:

5th

The High Command knew which were their most efficient regiments. They used to classify them all the way from gun fodder to a good fighting regiment. If you found a build-up of good fighting regiments in a certain part of the line, they'd prepare for an attack there so that was very important. You'd go over there and get in their trenches and bring back prisoners if you had any and if you didn't, bring back some of their rifles, and whatever you saw lying around their trench and particularly their badges.

ROSS, Alex.:

Then, of course, there was also the idea of maintaining the fighting morale of the troops. It was a very much superior method than the original method of making these piecemeal attacks, which generally were a failure and had the opposite effect.

CHRISTOPHERSON, R.L.:

5th

Those raids were very successful in that you very seldom lost anybody. Everything had to be done very quietly. And we would sneak up the face of their parapet and club the sentry over the head, jump in the trench and when you came to a dugout you'd pull a pin and throw a bomb in there and generally clean them up. And they panicked of course. They weren't expecting it and they got at last so they never knew when a raid was going to take place. And afterwards they did develop a daylight raid or two when the Germans were expecting them all night.

ROSS, Alex.:

We refused to recognize No Man's Land. We always considered that No Man's Land was ours and, as a point of honour, it had to be ours.

ORMOND, D.M.:

Well, we used to sit and watch the Boche, and we always calculated any time you wanted to play poker with him you could walk over, walk into his lines and come out again, and you'd do it so quickly that he wouldn't know about it. A raid is never reinforced. You hit and run.

NARRATOR:

Victor Wentworth Odlum had really started something. So impressed was Papa Joffre that he passed a detailed account of the Canadian adventure to all his Field Officers in the hope they'd take the hint. Most raids were small in scope and the raiders few in number, but as early as January the 31st the idea had been elaborated upon until it was almost beyond recognition.

CLYNE, H.R.H.:
29th

Scout Brown came to me and said that Heinie and his wife and the dog were the only people who occupied the trench opposite us and he thought it would be a very nice idea to go and visit and would I come with him. And I thought that was an excellent plan and I said, "But it has to be a platoon show." And then I requested permission from the O.C. Company, and he thought it was an excellent idea but it should be a company show. However, before doing anything we had to get permission from the commanding officer. The commanding officer was enthusiastic over it, but it should be a battalion show. And so it became a battalion show. However, we had to get permission from the Brigadier. The Brigadier was even more enthusiastic and thought it should be a brigade show. So we arranged that the 28th would raid at the same time. The raid was extremely successful but we wondered what had happened if we had tried to get permission from division.

McKAY, J.F.:
28th

First of all they taped out where they intended to go out and cross into the German lines. They taped that out behind the lines and they practised on this. And in the middle between the lines they built a little shelter of sandbags so that one could take shelter without having to get all the way to our lines in case they were machine gunned. And then, of course, they laid white tape down from our trench to this little stopping point where they could rest in the middle and on into the German line right over the German parapet so that if they were forced back unexpectedly they would know where to get out of the trench and where to find their gap through the wire. We could move our own wire in front of our lines, but when it came to the German lines we had to make a way through and they clipped this

(CONT)

McKAY, J.F.:(CONT)

with wire clippers. Now on a quiet night where you were only about 15 or 20 yards from the line you had to be very quiet, particularly when you got near their side of the wire. The last few clips of the clippers, the man who was clipping said that he was afraid he would be heard and he had to wait. Fortunately the German sentry on that particular point happened to have a cold and he did his clipping when the man was coughing. Now a lot of raids are made with artillery pounding the line in the afternoon and the day before. But this one was done without any previous artillery preparation. The first thing the Germans knew about this at all was when a box barrage was laid down. They laid down a box barrage to keep people coming in from the trenches on either side or down at the communication line. And at that particular time the men were practically on the brink of the trench and they went into the trenches there. And they divided and went up, some up the communication trench, one to the right and one to the left, and threw bombs down different dugouts and knocked anybody on the head that they had to. It was a very well organized affair.

BREWER, H.G.:
14th

There wasn't a commando raid in this last war that was any better conducted than those raids we put on. And our losses were very slight compared with the damage we did and the prisoners we brought back. The operation orders were perfect. They were simple. Every man knew what he had to do and they worked just like clockwork. And they were successful in demoralizing the enemy and they kept up our esprit de corps.

NARRATOR:

Next week "FLANDERS' FIELDS", Chapter Seven, "APPRENTICES AT ARMS" in which you hear, at first hand, the story of the St. Eloi craters and the Battles of Mount Sorrel, Hooze and Sanctuary Wood.

ANNOUNCER:

The first-person accounts of WORLD WAR I were researched, arranged and edited under the direction of Frank Lalor.

The series, originated by A. E. Powley, is written, narrated and produced by J. Frank Willis.

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen: "FLANDERS' FIELDS", Chapter Seven, "APPRENTICES AT ARMS."

NARRATOR: As the Winter of 1915 settled in, the Western Front congealed into two static lines. The character of the fighting changed to become siege warfare on a huge scale. Harassment of the enemy by trench-raid and artillery fire continued but the important new development was an increased emphasis on mining, a policy adopted by both sides.

While the Germans were content to dig shallow workings, from ten to thirty feet underground, tunnelling through sandy soil, in order to place their explosive charges below the British front lines we had and used both the skills and the equipment to work at a much greater depth.

In August of 1915 at St. Eloi British tunnellers had begun sinking shafts 50 to 60 feet deep from which galleries were run forward through hardpan to positions under the enemy front lines and a strategic height of land called "The Mound" which dominated the surrounding terrain and served the Germans as an observation post. By early March the sappers had done their job.

NICKLE, W.M.:
21st

We were in the reserve and we saw the engineers digging their tunnels, shoring them up and taking in the dynamite and the explosives, and you could hear the tunnelling going on underneath. It was an eerie feeling to sort of hear the rumble underneath you as you put your head down to try to get some rest.

NARRATOR:

On a front of six hundred yards six enormous mines had been created holding charges of from six hundred to thirty-one thousand pounds of ammonal.

At 4.15 A.M. on the 27th of March an opening salvo from 41 guns burst on the objective and at the same time the six mines were exploded at intervals of a few seconds.

The earth shook as from the sudden outburst of a volcano. The geyser of smoke and flame, of mud, debris, and bodies could be seen for miles.

TIMMS, M.H.:
21st

When they were blown up we were in supports and I'll never forget the sensation as long as I live. I thought the ground was going to go from underneath us. Poor old Heinie got it, he sure did.

NARRATOR:

With the Canadian Corps in reserve the British Third Division was now to press the attack. So great had been the holocaust that two front line companies of the German Jager Battalion were completely wiped out. Known landmarks were obliterated; even the familiar silhouette of "The Mound" had disappeared, to become a yawning hole, and trenches on both sides collapsed in rubble. Great confusion resulted. Objectives were lost sight of as it was found impossible, at this stage, to distinguish one giant crater from another.

POPE, M.A.:

The British Division attacked with two battalions. The battalion on the right had made a good attack and had captured their entire objective. The battalion on the left had had bad luck and the situation became very confounded by the fact there were some old craters there, and so some of the old craters were taken for the new and I don't think the British ever really held any of the newly blown craters.

NARRATOR:

From now confusion was the keynote. The British 9th Brigade had spent the night lying prone in the mud. Now they went forward to capture the first three craters and 300 yards beyond, occupied the German Third Line. But after three days of fighting the 3rd Division failed to realize that a gap existed in their centre and the alert enemy had slipped forward to occupy crater five. For nearly a week the British fought to dislodge the Germans from this position and finally succeeded on April 3rd. The enemy tenacity cost them 921 dead, 300 of whom had been killed and buried by the mine blasts.

SIMPSON, G.H.:
26th

I was standing on the road when two hundred Germans was marching down the road. They'd been in shell holes for three or four days without food or water. They'd been through hell, and I never saw two hundred sorrier-looking men in my life than what I saw there, and I remarked to a comrade who was with me, "If that's what's holding us up I could lick the whole blamed shooting match myself" but, bringing up the rear was a major of the Prussian Army marching behind them with the goose step, and I said to my comrade, "That's what's holding us up, that's the man." Because the next morning he lined up those two hundred and they were a rabble in front of him and, inside five minutes he had two hundred soldiers. You never saw such a change in your life. Two hundred soldiers with every German jack boot chucked out in front of them just like one man. And the remark passed through my mind then, "If ever I was taken a prisoner I'd love to be able to handle myself as good as that man is." He was a soldier.

NARRATOR:

Overnight on the 3rd - 4th of April the Canadian Corps took over the line, and the St. Eloi craters, from the exhausted British Third Division. For the first time an entire Army Corps relieved another. It was Ottawa's wish that the Canadians stay together; to enter and leave the line as a unit. This was to be the Second Division's first big job and it was a tough one.

PINKHAM, W.C.H.:
27th

We took over from a Scottish battalion, such as was left of them. They were commanded by a Captain. They didn't know whether they were in the craters or out of them. These craters were supposed to have been occupied at the time they were blown but it was proven later that the Heinies had three of them. And a heavy overcast had prevented any aerial reconnaissance, so that even Brigade and Division were sort of up in the air as to just where the line was.

HOLMES, C.B.:
25th

We went up that night. We followed a trench up till we got to the end of the trench and then the officer, he couldn't figure out where we were, or anything else, so we decided we would come back because the chances are if we had of kept on we would have walked right into the Germans. Nobody knew what the situation was.

POPE, M.A.:

Before the Canadians took over the first Gordons came in to relieve a British unit. I've never seen a finer looking body of men in my whole life than those first Gordons. They were magnificent.

SNAPE, H.:
27th

We wondered how these Gordon Highlanders was in such a hurry to get out of there. They said, "Well, good luck, fellows," and they grabbed their stuff and they went. Come daylight in the morning we found out where we was. Very different impression on the place, 'cause there was nothing but dead bodies all around you. Nothing! In fact, they'd built up a parapet with some of them.

POPE, M.A.: It was the saddest thing I'd ever seen because, as you walked in your hip boots up to your knees in mud and slime, you were feeling dead bodies of Gordons underfoot all the way. One of my corporals, Willie Simpson, came from Aberdeen and, if I'm not mistaken, Aberdeen is the home of the Gordons. He was in a berserk rage and he was bayonetting the sandbags. He was so angry to see his own fellow countrymen lying there drowned and covered with mud and destroyed that he'd gone wild and I had to calm him down.

NARRATOR: But the Gordons who died took many an enemy with them.

WHEADON, C.:
25th There was nothing but dead Germans and dead Highlanders when we went in there, and there was this great big Prussian, I suppose he was about six feet tall and he must have weighed pretty near three hundred, and he was laying on his back in the trench there, and this little Gordon Highlander didn't look to be any more than about five foot tall, was laying right on top, both dead - this wee little Highlander on top this big Prussian.

SNAPE, H.:
27th The first man that come over to us was a General Turner, just as it was breaking daylight in the morning. He was our Divisional General. He looked around and he says, "Not much of a place is this, is it, fellows? Have you had any rum this morning?" "No, sir, we have had nothing." "You send a man down and get some rum." So then our senior sergeant come up with a whole bag of rations and half a jar of rum, and we had a drink of rum, but nobody wanted anything to eat. These dead bodies lying around there took your appetite right away from you. And our Corporal, he was a pretty good scout, he says, "How about a game of cards?" So we started to play cards. Well we couldn't take no interest in the cards. This place just got you.

PINKHAM, V.C.H.:
27th Our H.Q. went into the front line. What had been shall I say the front line. There was no connecting trench from the front line to these craters. It had been impossible to dig this trench because of the weather. There was an attempt at a trench. It was about a foot deep or something. And this is what our men had to follow to get up to them.

NARRATOR: Impossible as it seems, for a year and a half through shot and shell, the Canadians had fought their way in cloth forage caps. Now, for the first time, the steel helmet was issued fifty to a Company.

BRYDEN, C.V.:
31st

We were issued with steel helmets and nobody seemed to want to wear them. There were about two to a section and they were generally given to the men on sentry. The thing that they objected to was the weight, but we were very soon cured of that idea.

WITHELL, P.:
27th

We went in overland very early in the morning and went into the crater on the extreme right. Eight of us out of my section were sent out in front of the crater to put in a block in a German communication trench and act as a listening post. Just before dawn they withdrew us, took us back to the crater and then they withdrew all the rest of the platoon that was in the crater into an old German communication trench that was pretty well shelled in then. The eight men that I was with went into a shellhole about 150 yards back of the crater, and we had our breakfast there. Everything was very very quiet, there wasn't a sound. And all at once they opened up with everything he had.

SNAPE, H.:
27th

It just seemed as if there was a signal come from the German line. There was one big shell come over and then after that it started. OOOH!

FRYDAY, J.N.:
27th

They sent out a few range finders, a shell here and there. Then they opened up hell on earth.

PINKHAM, V.C.H.:
27th

They were absolutely alone out there. We were back here in our old front line and sort of watching and all that sort of thing, but there was no communication in the daytime.

SNAPE, H.:
27th

We was in this outpost away out in front. Well in the midst of this here shelling there was half a man lands in there, and his eyes were still open. That wasn't very nice to look at you see. And one of our fellows, he went kind of crazy. He was screaming and yelling. So I says to this Corporal, I says, "How about taking this guy out," I

(CONT)

SNAPE, H.: (cont)

says, "He'll drive everybody crazy the way he is going on "Well," he says, "You can't get out." I says, "Give me permission to go out," I says, "I'll find a way out alright." I had quite a time getting out but I got this fellow out and got him back to the old line and I hands him over to the M.O. He said, "You'd better stick around for a while." "No," I said, "I'd better get back." Not that I wanted to go back, but I went back anyway.

FRYDAY, J.N.:
27th

Sergeant Major Williams sent two of us out for a bundle of sandbags each but there was no trench to go out in. We went out overland. We were buried several times but we were never hit. We got our sandbags, we were getting back in. Everything was going up then. And we came to this "Y" in the trench and I took the one to the left and he wouldn't come with me. He said I was going to the wrong trench, and he went in the one to the right and, as far as I know, he went straight into the German lines, because he has never been seen or heard of since. I came back to the platoon and he was never seen.

WITHELL, P.:
27th

A big shell came over. It just burst in front of this shellhole where we were and it hit the other eight men. It didn't touch me. I never got a scratch. A cousin of mine, George Bowman, he was worst hit and I told the others to get going. Some of them just crawled. They were badly hit. And when I looked at George I knew I couldn't do too much myself, so I went down this trench and got a stretcher-bearer, Percy Smith, and another shell came over and got Percy. Killed him right outright So I went ahead then with George and did the best I could for him. I knew perfectly well that he couldn't live. Around 4 o'clock, or maybe a little later, he passed on. Then I decided well it was no use sitting there so I went down the trench to where the rest of the Platoon wer and I couldn't find a man. So I came back, waited till it was dark, and I decided then I'd go out. So I went ou overland the way I thought I should go, kept plodding along and I heard voices. Finally I got close to them. They were German voices so I turned around and beat it right back to the shellhole. In a little while I heard plodding, somebody coming, so I don't know whether I said, "Halt, who goes there?" or "Who's that?" -- something anyway. He said, "Major McCall." I said, "Where's the Platoon? I couldn't find them." He said, "Oh, we withdrew them a long time ago." So he said, "Well, will you come back with me?" Well, I'd have gone anywhere with the Major I was so pleased to see him.

NARRATOR: Now it was up to the Engineers to bring some order out of chaos and create a cohesive defence system among the gaping craters and incredibly distorted terrain. The largest of the craters, by the way, measured 50 feet deep and 180 feet across with ramparts of loose earth 20 feet high extending 50 feet in all directions. The first move was to reverse the captured German trenches and pump them out.

POPE, M.A.: We worked a little but there was not much we could do because you don't get very much forwarder shovelling mud, running mud. At the foot of the valley running near a creek was our reserve line. It was a good line but the level of the bottom of the trench was pretty close to the level of the stream. We had a lot of rain so the stream overflowed its banks and was running down the reserve trench. Well the Division, with great zeal, sent us up a pump and they told our "D" section, commanded by D. J. Miller, to pump the trench dry, but he telephoned back and he said "There's hardly much point in pumping water out of the stream and back into the stream, is there?" But he was told to get on with it, so he started this pump. I suppose it drew a good deal of fire but, naturally, accomplished no good purpose whatever.

NARRATOR: In this baffling maze of trenches, mine craters and shellholes, on the night of the 4th - 5th the 27th Battalion were trying desperately to reorganize and consolidate their position.

RILEY, H.J.:
27th

"B" Company had seventy men in the line and they had fifty casualties. We were occupying the old German line. And I went in to relieve "B" Company. We left the German front line. They'd shelled it all to pieces. And we got them all in rifle pits and dug in. And then I went across and made contact with the 31st who were on the left.

NARRATOR: To compound the confusion, the Canadian line was under continual bombardment; an unremitting rain of shells described by a British Artillery Officer who had spent a year in the Ypres Salient as the heaviest he had ever seen. Two thousand yards of trench in the 27th's position was completely demolished and the destruction of their parapet exposed the 31st Battalion to enfilade machine gun fire and sniping.

SNAPE, H.:
27th

Well we stuck it out till that night and just as we got relieved by the 29th battalion they started to shell the front line again. And we were caught right in the front line. You just didn't know where the deuce to go. You were just rushing from one place to another, and I dived in kind of a surface dugout with a bunch of sandbags over it and I thought, "Well I'm alright here", and my gosh, after things had quietened down and I looked to see where I was, I was in a bomb cache where the grenades is stored. So I got out of there quick. That was pretty hot, that was.

NARRATOR: Late on the night of the 5th the 29th Battalion came to the relief of the badly depleted forward companies of the 27th. The operation dragged on for hours. The incoming troops laden down with equipment could move only at a snail's pace in the mud and congestion of the narrow communication trench.

RINTOUL, A.E.:
29th

The orders were that we were to go into the craters and to make a defence in No. 5 crater. Now No. 5 crater was not the crater we were sent to. Everybody was confused. We got in there, in the communication trench up to the front line, which was probably one hundred yards long, and there we stayed all night long till midnight. Gwynne was commanding "A" Company and he went up himself first

(CONT)

RINTOUL, A.E.:(cont) and looked the whole thing over and he came back and said, "To take men in there is complete suicide". "And," he said, "I refuse to take this Company in." So we stayed there and we were asleep and sitting on the firing steps or lying on the paradocs. Nobody cared. We were packed in like sardines, which was plain stupid again. And Gwynne didn't like it, and he went back to H.Q. and said he should move out some of these men. And then about midnight he came up and detailed a fellow by the name of Lyons, and he was to command 21 men to go up the communication trench and see what they could do in building up the fortifications. Of course they only got to the foot of this communication trench when the, this blasted shell exploded, what they call a double-cylinder high explosive shell. And this thing burst on the back of the trench and it cleaned out the whole lot of us. I don't know how many were killed in it. I don't even remember anybody else surviving except Lyons and myself.

SCOTT, G.:
29th

Any wiring that had been put in by the Signals had all been broken. There was no telephone communication at all. So I was one of those that was detailed to get in touch with Major So-and-So and find where he was and where anybody else was that I could. With some difficulty I found what was supposed to be No. 4 Crater. I don't think it was. There was no one there at all except bodies and there were plenty of those. I remember a great big chap standing up against the wall of the Crater, still with a rifle and a bayonet in his hand, a grin on his face as if he'd been having quite a time of it until he was shot, but there was no living soul in the crater at all, and I went on to the line that we were, on paper, supposed to be occupying, and we were, but that line was a ditch, and it had been filled in with shelling and the mud settling from both sides, and the men were sitting in a crouching position, the water over their knees, and I finally found my man and he said he was supposed to have contact with the 31st Battalion but he didn't know where they were, and he didn't know which crater was which. In fact, days afterwards nobody knew which crater was which and who was occupying them. St. Eloi was a mess from start to finish. Nobody knew where anybody was.

NARRATOR:

Meanwhile, the enemy had slipped into and secured craters 2 and 3 and from there spread out to capture 4 and 5.

Thus, in less than three hours the Germans regained all the ground they had lost between March 27th and April 3rd.

FRYDAY, J.N.:
27th

We were cut off, no communication, and when we put up flares for artillery and the artillery had the wrong range, our own Company Commander, he said, "Boys, your own artillery are on you. Every man for himself. Retreat down the trench." So we retreated to the right. And when I got down as far as McCaw's dugout, Harry Williams just had his head blown off. He was looking over the parapet and he blocked the whole trench. We pushed him over the trench to make room to get by.

PINKHAM, V.C.H.:
27th

There was an attempt made to retaliate or to get back what we thought had been lost and General Riley, at that time a Captain, led the bombing raid, but they didn't get very far.

NARRATOR:

On the left the 31st Battalion, reinforced by elements of the 28th, was ordered to retake craters 4 and 5.

They had to attack from the side, lost their direction and took 6 and 7 in error.

BRYDEN, C.V.:
31st

I was in a crater with about sixty-five other men, and what the defensive position consisted of there was a large crater with a big pool of water in the middle and a catwalk around the edges of it constructed of planks, and the wounded was generally laid on the planks and most of them rolled off into the mud and were drowned there. Only time you could see anything was either by the flashes of the shells or the star shells that went up or what light the fire-arms was giving. And before morning we left the crater due to the fact it was untenable. The enemy was bursting shells in the middle of the crater itself. Three of us left the crater. There was not very many of us got out of there.

GRIMMETT, A.M.:
29th

The bombardment was so heavy that I could see two and three shells in the air at the same time coming down.

ROSS, Alex.:

We floundered around there for two or three days and really accomplished nothing. It wasn't a battle - it was a ghastly mess. Intelligence was bad. Staff work was bad, and it was not until quite late in the operation, as a matter of fact when the whole thing had practically petered out, that Captain McIntyre made a personal reconnaissance and discovered that we'd been fighting for the wrong craters all the time.

NARRATOR: This milling about, this uncertain fumbling attack and counter attack would go on for weeks. And ultimately end in failure and frustration. On the night of the 6th - 7th the Fourth Brigade relieved the shattered Sixth.

WILLIAMS, George:
18th

When they sent us up there they didn't know where the Germans were. They said, "You go up there, you'll find out where the trenches is." Dark night we went up there. There was no trenches. I forget how many days we were there. We were never told when to come out and nobody came to us. We stayed there so long I said to the Corporal, "You'd better go out and see what the score is." Well he went out and came back to relieve us, you see. When we got out our Battalion was away back of the line and I met our Sergeant Major and he says, "Where have you been? You're put in as captured." I said, "Well we're here, all my men but one. One was killed." And they couldn't believe that I had come out.

ROSS, Alex.:

We never had a chance. We didn't know what we were to do. We didn't know what we were supposed to do, and nobody told us.

BAIN, G.E.:
31st

I could remember, on the way in, General Plumer, one of the dear old boys with a monocle, stopped us on the road with a huge map showing the crater positions, and he said, "There you are chaps, these are the Craters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5." He said, "You'll take them, I know. Goodbye and good luck."

NARRATOR:

The same dear old boy with the monocle, Lt. Gen. Plumer, in a less jovial mood was, according to Sir Douglas Haig, seeking the removal of Generals Turner and Ketchen from their commands as a result of the St. Eloi fiasco. The Commander-in-Chief would not agree to this and Haig's views coincided with those of Prime Minister Borden. There were changes of appointments to follow, however, and the feeling persisted that our troops had not been well

(CONT)

NARRATOR:(CONT) led. Altogether it had been an unfortunate first battle for the Second Division. Between April 4th and 16th Canadian casualties numbered 1,373.

LOUCKS, Kirke:
31st

Your mind was nothing but a confusion of what's going on and where and who's giving orders, and what are you supposed to do, and what are you holding, and where's the Hun, and where are our supports, and where's the artillery, and where's anybody. It was about as rugged as anything that I saw then or later. The mud at Passchendaele was bad, and the fighting was bad, but for troops who had had what you might call a sinecure for six months to walk in and come out with casualties that were up in the hundreds left you in a very confused and twisted sort of mind.

NARRATOR: Now both sides reverted to static warfare, glad to see the last of fighting in the misery of the St. Eloi craters.

But as comparative quiet came to the front lines there was a great crescendo of activity at the highest level. Abruptly and as an aftermath of St. Eloi, General Alderson, who had assumed command of the Canadian Forces on Salisbury Plain, was removed to the post of Inspector General of Canadian Forces in England. The Canadian Government left the naming of his successor to the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Douglas Haig. He selected a distinguished British Officer and a future Governor General of Canada -- Lieut. General the Honourable Sir Julian Byng.

ODLUM, V.W.:

Byng was a good soldier, a very good soldier, and an excellent man for the Canadian Corps.

ROSS, Alex.: He did a great deal for us. He revolutionized a lot of our organization and made it much more sensible. We were a civilian army. He was able to give us ideas that appealed to our common sense, and which improved my morale and my battalion, I'm sure.

PRICE, C.B.:
14th I give him credit for the welding of the Corps together and giving it that first Corps spirit. That was one of our great strengths as a Corps.

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, elements of General Byng's new command were getting a bit of rest in Sanctuary Wood.

LEE, J.H.:
PPCLI The front line trenches were in Sanctuary Wood and we spent a good deal of our time in improving our dugouts in the woods, and there was a little stream ran through and gave us an opportunity to have a much needed bath. It was just a case of filling in time. You weren't planning an offensive or planning any special raid or anything like that. You were just doing your job as an ordinary soldier and you were on guard. So you just live a reasonably quiet life and yet every tour that we did in that Maple Copse - Sanctuary Wood area, you realized at the end of the tour you'd had forty or fifty casualties.

NARRATOR: The respite was no more than a breather. Shortly before the 7th and 8th Brigades took over their stretch of the line the 9th Brigade was reporting a step-up in enemy shelling.

FALLON, A.E.:
52nd We were relieved the night of the 1st of June, and the Fourth Canadian Mounted Rifles relieved our unit and the Princess Patricias relieved the 58th Battalion. And the shelling was very heavy, registering on our front line and supports. We knew that something drastic was imminent.

WHITE, McDonald:
58th

The Germans were doing a lot of these exploratory raids, testing to see what strength you had and so on like that. We'd been warned about it and the first one that I encountered was one there at five o'clock in the afternoon and they started coming across in broad daylight and so we of course, got into the firing positions and so forth but, fortunately for us, they just got up within fifty yards of our front line when they were decimated a bit with the machine gun bullets particularly and they turned and fled.

NARRATOR:

Despite the warning signs the 7th was not prepared for what was coming up.

LEE, J.H.
PPCLI

We knew that it was going to be a cushy trip because we'd got raspberry jam instead of apricot jam and everything was lovely in the garden. And then bingo, the next morning all hell let loose, and there was no let-up. It was just continuous spang, spang, spang, for hour after hour, and it wasn't coming in all from the front; it was coming in over our parados or the back of the trench, so that that whole area practically was flattened.

YULE, George:
5 CMR

It was a beautiful summer's day and at 8 o'clock Fritz started his bombardment, and all those beautiful trees in Maple Copse, by 2 o'clock in the afternoon there wasn't a stump left higher than a foot and a half to two feet. That's how devastating the barrage was. I was sent back to find "B" Company and I met "B" Company coming up from the communication trench by the side of Zillibeke Lake, and after that I kept my distance. H.Q. had all been blown to smithereens and there was no use going back there. Our Colonel had been killed, our Adjutant and Second-in-Command had both been wounded. Everything was destroyed in that neighbourhood.

NARRATOR:

For four hours a veritable tornado of fire ravaged the Canadian positions from west of Mount Sorrel to the northern edge of Sanctuary Wood. The full fury burst on the southern positions held by the Fourth Canadian Mounted Rifles.

(CONT)

NARRATOR:(CONT)

The London Times, in a running story of the battle said:

"Shortly before one o'clock the artillery fire against our front line was lifted and used to form a barrier to prevent reinforcements coming up. Masses of hostile infantry, nine or ten battalions, were now seen approaching it on a front of less than two miles, crossing the intervening spaces between the two lines, which was often not more than 100 yards wide. By half-past two the enemy had succeeded in penetrating the front line at many points, as he greatly outnumbered the defenders. A desperate hand-to-hand struggle took place, which was particularly fierce in the neighborhood of Sanctuary Wood and on the rising ground a little to the north of Hill 60, many of the Canadians refusing to yield to superior numbers, and preferring death to surrender".

In all, the Fourth Mounted Rifles suffered 89% casualties. Of 702 officers and men only 76 came through unscathed.

From a distance, troops of the Second Division watched the inferno.

STALLARD, S.:
25th

I was in the front line there at sixteen trench, and there was a German over ahead of me. He was looking too, the same way, and not a sniper there to hit us. Well that place there was just nothing but a mass of smoke and flame and all that. You could see the yellow Lyddite shells bursting and see the earth going about seventy-five hundred feet up in the air. Oh it was a devil up there.

ACKERLEY, P.:
42nd

It was the heaviest concentration of artillery fire ever known up to that date according to the official records.

NARRATOR:

Somewhat to the north of the decimated Fourth Canadian Mounted Rifles the 4th Company of the P.P.C.L.I., fleshed out with replacements, were in immediate support of the Regiment's front line.

LEE, J.H.:
PPCLI

We were sturned. We didn't know what had happened. We wondered what had happened to the fellows up in No. 1 and No. 2 Company and the chaps that were in the front line. But it seemed to me that it let up around noon. We lost all track of time frankly. And then the German machine guns would open up on our line, and I don't know just how to describe machine gun fire coming over your parapet. It just gives you the impression that there is just a swoosh, swoosh, and if you stick your head up you've had it.

NARRATOR:

Still the field grey waves of German troops came on breaking over our positions swamping the defenders.

DEAN, N.G.:
R.C.R.

We were up in what they call the Hooze Craters and we were only about twenty yards from the Germans. The trenches were very close in that section. We were on the left of the Canadian line and on our left flank was a great big swamp, and then there was the start of the Imperial line. And in there was the unit called the Shropshires. Well there was the Shropshires, the swamp, then there was the R.C.R., and then there was the Princess Pats and the C.M.R.'s. Well, he couldn't come through the swamp on account of the depth of the water and that, so he went through the Shropshires on our left. He went through them as if there was nobody there because they had really had a pounding, and the same thing happened on our right flank. He went through the Princess Pats and C.M.R.'s into a place called Sanctuary Wood. Well then, there we were. We were still up in our position because he couldn't hit us with anything outside of rifle fire and machine gun fire.

NARRATOR: Less fortunate, the P.P.C.L.I. was once again cut off and decimated.

SOLTAU, W.G.:
PPCLI

I was buried and dug myself out with a friend, and then we got into a kind of dugout with a few others. The Germans were all around us and we shot at a few and then someone threw a grenade at us and blocked the entrance to our little shelter, and evidently thought we were dead. We lay perfectly quiet just whispering between ourselves until night came. And when night came we got out and rejoined the reserve trench where we found the remnants of the regiment, and that was that.

LEE, J.H.:
PPCLI

We weren't aware back in No. 4 Company of what was happening up the line. We knew there had been terrible casualties and the word finally, I think it was around noon, the word came back to us to move up to reinforce in the front line, and we started up the communication trench such as it was. My first real shock was when there were five of us going forward and this shell exploded and then there was only one. These four chaps, my pals, that were in front of me, there was no signs of them at all. That was my first real introduction to the horrors of war. I had seen chaps wounded before that but never just wiped out, zingo - no more. We didn't go very far because there was no way of getting through. Everything was blown to smithereens and we knew that they had broken through so we were in what was then the front line, and our officer stopped us at a certain point and we were told to man what there was of the trench system and be prepared to repel a further attack. Nearly all our officers were casualties, and Hammy Gault was terribly wounded at that time. That was when he lost his leg. Colonel Buller, who was our Commanding Officer, had been killed and our own Company Commander was badly wounded too. And there was only a subaltern left in No. 4 Company, and he gathered us around between ten o'clock and midnight and I remember as though it was yesterday he said, "Well men, word has come through that the Germans have broken through into Zillibeke Village," which was behind us. "We're completely cut off. No reinforcements can come up, so there is only one thing for us to do. It's just to stick it out and see what happens." And that is precisely what we did until the next morning and different attempts were made to reinforce us or relieve us, I should say, because by this time there weren't too many left.

NARRATOR: The Second and Fifth Mounted Rifles rushed in to the support of the 8th Brigade's threatened front line. They walked into a charnel house.

BOWE, S.R.:
2 C.M.R.

There was no trenches left when we got there. The men were being rushed in in column of fours and it was just like pouring metal into a blast furnace. They just dissolved as they got in under the curtain of fire. They just seemed to dissolve. And the shells were exploding amongst all these dead and wounded all the time. Now when we came out you would have sworn that we had been in a slaughter house. Our clothes were completely saturated and stiff with blood and guts. That night I saw men completely break, and I started to crack a bit, you see, and I started to whimper, and this fellow came alongside of me, and he pats me on the back and he says, "Come on, kid," he says, "buck up, you're no Goddam use to us like that." He brought me out of it.

NARRATOR: The road to Ypres was open but, unaccountably, the Germans dug in six to seven hundred yards west of their original line. Again they failed, as they had failed behind the gas at Ypres a year before, to press an obvious advantage. And while the enemy consolidated, troops of the First Division rushed up from reserve to strengthen the defences.

DAWSON, F.:
7th

When the Third Division eventually took over from us we were relieved, and we had gone down towards St. Omer weary and worn out for a rest period when we had orders to return. We marched back this twenty-four miles cursing and swearing. We had always been in support or in the line and we had never had a rest period.

DUNCAN, W.R.:
14th

We advanced up to Zillibeke Station. We knew the trenches were somewhere in front where the C.M.R.'s were but we didn't know how they were placed. So No. 1 and No. 2 Platoons was sent out to find out. We advanced there and

(CONT)

DUNCAN, W.R.:(CONT) come into the C.M.R. trenches; nothing but dead and wounded. Well, Captain Lugar took us out and we extended in the field. This was at night time. "Now," he says, "I'll go along with a scout and I'll try and find out what's in front." The next time I saw Captain Lugar was a year after, in England, with a leg off.

NARRATOR: At 8.45 P.M. June 2nd General Byng ordered that "All ground lost today will be retaken tonight." This counter attack was to move off at 2.00 A.M. but communications were a shambles, distances were great and enemy fire continued to add confusion. Finally the attack was postponed to 7.00 A.M.

PALIN, F.:
14th We got into position and we dug in with our entrenching tools and they were supposed to have artillery barrage. I think it was seven o'clock. Nothing came and the order had come to go ahead with no artillery barrage, period.

FLENLEY, L:
14th That morning from about 6.30 on the Germans had balloons up there watching what was going on and we were moving into position in broad daylight. Consequently, when we got the order to go over, bingo, we got it.

NARRATOR: Then --- more trouble.

The signal to begin the attack was to be six simultaneous green rockets. Some misfired. Fourteen in all were sent aloft before a total of six had burst and they were anything but simultaneous. Two battalions saw no rockets. Other units hung back not understanding the sporadic green flashes.

WHITEMAN, H.H.:
14th

Chubby Power came over and asked us why we weren't advancing, that the Very pistol lights had gone up, and we said, "Well they were confusing." As a matter of fact there were six supposed to go up and all I saw was a red and a green. We weren't advancing all at the one time with the result that the Germans were able to pick on us, you see. By the time I went over the trench with my crowd we were just sitting ducks.

DAWSON, F.:
7th

We'd got our wire all cut through the night and we took our original third line with very little trouble, took about a dozen prisoners. We got back to our second line and we took about 60 men, Saxons. Well we consolidated in there and we were trying to take our front line, our original front line. Well we met with such terrific fire that fellows hardly got out of our own trenches before they were killed. I got about one hundred feet, I guess, when I got a machine gun bullet in my right arm. I got up and we went on again but fellows were just dropping like rabbits. I got hit in the head with another bullet through my helmet. So that was my finish fighting in the 7th Battalion.

NARRATOR:

And the experience of the 7th Battalion was no different from that of the 14th and 15th.

DUNCAN, W.R.:
14th

The signal come and there we all started to advance up the hill, got pretty well up and we were coming pretty near a hedge when the Germans opened machine gun fire and began to mow us down. All of a sudden I thought I was cut in half. The boys were a few yards in front and managed to pull me in there and the next thing I heard was Sergeant Thibaud of No. 4 Company saying "The stretcher-bearers will never get up here tonight. Get a blanket and carry him out." I had thirty-one men when I went in that morning and out of the thirty-one men there were nine killed and there were eighteen wounded.

BOWE, S.:
2 C.M.R.

There was 46 men in the Platoon I was in. There were forty men in my Platoon killed.

ARTHURS, R.C.:
49th

Our watches were synchronized at half-past seven and away we went exactly at half-past seven, and we were practically blown off the face of the earth, as a matter of fact. It was a bad one. We lost about four hundred and fifty men that day, killed and wounded.

CRITCHLEY, W.:
10th Btn.

There was a call for artillery support and I will never forget. There was a battery of 4.5 hows. opened up, and every single shell landed in our trench and killed quite a few of our men until we eventually sent a man back and got them stopped. You can't blame the artillery for it. The guns were suddenly rushed into terrain before they had the time to plot it. The trenches were fifty, sometimes one hundred, sometimes two hundred yards apart. That was all. And it means pinpointing it pretty clearly to get accurate coverage.

PINSON, Jack:
7th

Most of our artillery had been taken out to move down to the Somme to prepare for the Somme battle, which started on the 1st of July, with the British troops and the French; and we had to bluff him that we were stronger than we were. I went out that afternoon with a message to the village of Zillibeke where Battalion H.Q. was. Now the Captain had sent back three sets of messengers, two men at a time and had got no answer back, and I went over hundreds of acres of ground on that trip back that you could hardly step for dead men. It was pieces of dead men. It was horrible when you think of it but by that time we were toughened into it. We'd face up to anything and I got through with that message and back with the answer. I think that I had horseshoes.

PRICE, C.B.:
14th

We went in to that show with something like I think six to eight hundred men and thirty officers and came out with thirty and three. Mind you others did straggle in afterwards but the battalion was completely decimated for the time being.

NARRATOR:

On the 4th of June what was left alive of the Prince Patricia's gave over to relieving troops and moved back to Ypres.

LEE, J.H.:
PPCLI

Eventually word came up to proceed to Ypres independently. You just got back the best way you can and that was over-land. You hugged the trench system, if there was any, and then you made a quick dash for another section, and eventually we went into Ypres through the Lille Gate. And there weren't more than about a hundred and twenty or twenty-five left out of the regiment. Some drifted in later but that was what the casualties were in that show. The next day we were in hutments just a couple of miles back of Ypres and I remember so well Brigadier Macdonnell. He was our Brigade Commander, and he came around and visited every hut and the Brigadier was in tears. I'm not just saying that as an expression. He was crying when he saw the few of us that were left at that time.

NARRATOR:

The Germans were now within two miles of Ypres in the heart of the Salient. They must be expelled from these positions but Haig was reluctant to divert troops from the build-up for the Somme offensive.

A change of tactics was indicated.

It was determined that the Canadian Corps would be left in the Salient, that one Brigade of Infantry would be added and that the emphasis would shift to Artillery, that the next counter attack would be made by few Infantry and many guns.

But before the guns could be registered the enemy struck again.

ROSS, Alex.:

On the 5th of June I got a message to be prepared to relieve that night. We were ordered in to take over the left sector of the Canadian portion bounded on the north by the Menin Road and taking in Mount Sorrel and Hooze. Of course that was June, long daylight, early dawn, and it was a very slow process getting into a line where you couldn't move in daylight at all. Dawn was breaking before the last of the troops were out. Well everything

(CONT)

ROSS, Alex.:(cont) was very quiet during the relief, and it was very quiet all morning until just about noon, we heard the unmistakable sound of an explosion of mines. Two Companies were practically wiped out. And that was followed by the most intense barrage that I ever saw in all my years in the Western Front. The Front was held by two Companies. On the right the defences were centered around what was the old Hooze Chateau and the support platoons of the Company were housed in cellars in the old Chateau. The right Company was practically completely lost. Half of them were captured in those cellars. They never got out to fight at all. The explosion did not destroy the cellars but it blew the entrances in. They were trapped; the only prisoners we ever captured. On the left there was no continuous line at all. The line was held by what they called Grouse Pits, which are simply slit trenches dug at intervals. But, fortunately, the Company H.Q. was situated some little distance back in a rather secure place in a big culvert which went under the Menin Road which is a main highway paved with cobblestones. There was a considerable nucleus of troops there out of the effect of the fire. I think every gun in the Salient that could range at all was centered on that 1500 yards that we were holding but, fortunately, they had made a miscalculation in their registration and the curtain of fire fell about 100 yards behind our support line. Captain Stiles, who was in command of the left Company, was able to mobilize his H.Q. and what he had there plus some heavy machine gunners who, fortunately, had been unable to get out the night before and had to stay there because they couldn't get out so, with their combined fire, plus the fire from our support line and the fire from the battalion on the right which was not affected, the enemy was stopped in his tracks. He came no farther. The morale of the survivors was really higher than ever. They had held all the lines worth holding. As a matter of fact, it was one occasion when the higher command began to develop some reasonable common sense about front line positions. They didn't order a counter-attack on that particular part of the line. In other words, they considered the ground wasn't worth taking. Before that it had always been the idea that if you lost a piece of ground you got to take it back whether you wanted it or not.

NARRATOR:

And that was still the feeling about Mount Sorrel whatever was thought about Hooze, six days later. For ten solid hours on 12th June, German positions between Hill 60 and Sanctuary Wood were shelled unremittingly. At 8.30 that evening the Canadian Corps moved to the attack behind a smoke screen and a driving rainstorm.

ALLEY, H.R.:
3rd

We had never made an attack as a battalion before. We had made company attacks at Festubert and company attacks at Givenchy, but up to that time our fighting had been practically all on the defensive. We were faced with a woods which, of course had been shelled to pieces, but the stumps were all there and they were full of barbed wire, and it was going to be very muddy quite obviously, and very difficult and in driving rain and pitch dark it would be very easy even for well trained people to lose direction, so I recommended to the C.O. that we do the thing with the bayonet without any shooting at all, which would have two effects. In the first place we wouldn't be shooting each other, but the great thing would be that if there were rifle flashes we would know it was the Germans. The Germans wouldn't know who it was and they wouldn't know where we were until daylight. So we did it that way, with cold steel. And it was a very successful little show. You had to pick your holes in the barbed wire, in sections, which was a quarter of a platoon in single file. You couldn't have gone through in line. It would have been held up all over the place.

And it was just little files of ten men led by a corporal, finding the hole in the wire, trusting that their officers were in front of them, which they were. And then when you got to the other side of your obstacle forming your line and you couldn't move beyond a slow walk, you know, you would be almost up to your knees perhaps in mud. Then we had to change direction in the dark which was a real tricky thing, and only a very well drilled unit could have done it. As far as the attack itself was concerned it was all over quickly. We were on top of them before they knew it and the rain was at our backs and it was in their faces. There was some pretty bloody bayonetting. And, as a matter of fact, we cleared the second German line and went on past without even knowing that we had. So we re-established the

(CONT)

ALLEY, H.R.:(cont) original front, that is the front as it had been before the second of June, and our casualties were very few. The guns had given us wonderful support, wonderful support. I had never heard such a bombardment before. It was terrific.

MacDONALD, C.A.:
26th

They just peppered that Sanctuary Wood from the 2nd till the 12th, and then our fellows went over. Well there was nothing to mop up. You couldn't find a trench. You couldn't find anything of the Jerry line. It was just flattened and you could find a hand here, a head there, and a leg there, and sometimes you'd find a body with the head on it and some with them off. It would turn you sick but you know by that time we were getting kind of hardened to it, seeing so many slaughtered, you know.

ALLEY, H.R.:
3rd

We were relieved late, midnight or after. And I can well recall what was left of the platoons, tight formation, faces just white with fatigue, clothes covered with mud, but soldiers. At noon that same day when they hadn't had very much rest we heard a rumour that some of our wounded were still lying up there, so I called a parade of the battalion, what there was of it, and I said, "Now, this is not an order, but I've heard that there are some of our wounded up there and I want to know how many of you fellows and which will volunteer to go up with me and bring them out, and if the rumour is confirmed we'll have a go at it." Every damn man stepped forward. We didn't have to go. It was just a rumour but they were ready to go.

NARRATOR:

Consolidation of the new front line began on the 13th June. On the 14th the enemy mounted two counter attacks and both were broken up by our Artillery.

MacDONALD, C.A.:
26th

We heard this battery behind the German line. We heard the old gun go and I heard her coming, woof, woof, woof, woof -- whoosh, Bang! Well it dropped short, but it went off. So the next one dropped behind us and we all made a dive for this Jerry dugout. There were four of us in the dugout and we heard the gun boom back of the Jerry line and then we heard her coming. I said, "Boys, that doesn't sound good", and the words wasn't out of my mouth when she landed right on top of us. And the last thing I remember just a flash of light right in front

(CONT)

MacDonald, C.A.:(cont) of my face like that, you know, and I was gone, out, and the next thing I remember I came to. They had dug us out and I heard Fleming our scout officer, saying "Tie old Mac up, he's better than a thousand dead ones." They were just going to take to work and roll me over and cover me up and leave me there. Well then the next time I came to I was in that there horse ambulance going out over the shell holes and craters. There were four of us. I was in the bottom bunk and there was a German up over top of me and a German on that side and a German up there, and there was one fellow, he turns to me and he says, "Well, Canada, that's the end of it for us." I said, "It may be the end of it for you but not for me," I said, "I'm still in one piece yet."

NARRATOR:

The Battle of Mount Sorrel fought from June 2nd to 14th cost the Canadian Corps 8,000 casualties but they had once again proven themselves as fighting men.

Here, for the first time, they had taken the initiative, mounted a prepared attack at divisional strength against the German lines and had won their battle.

At this point another and unexpected victory came to the Canadian soldier in the trenches. His outcry against the Ross Rifle which had been heard for more than a year was finally listened to. Sam Hughes belatedly agreed that the Ross be replaced by the Lee-Enfield.

ODLUM, V.W.:

A message was sent out to us who commanded in the field asking us for a report on the Ross Rifle. I sent in a report that was final. The report was this: In my battalion the men themselves have made their decision. The battalion now has not a single Ross Rifle. Every one has been ditched and Lee-Enfields have been picked up. There is the opinion of the battalion. And Sam Hughes never forgave me for that.

NICKLE, W.N.:
21st

It was a first-class sniping rifle but it was no good for trench warfare. And I was so mad to see the Ross Rifle being thrown in shell holes to cool it so it'd fire, and then get some water and mud in the breach and then it wouldn't fire for that reason. I told all my fellows to go pick up a Lee-Enfield and a bayonet if they could from the dead, and I arrived back behind the lines for our rest with my outfit completely equipped with the Lee-Enfield Rifle. The Lee-Enfield was a short snug little rifle, a very short bayonet instead of the long bayonet like the Ross had. It was a first-class piece of equipment. And my battalion commander at the time was W. St. Pierre Hughes, a brother of Sir Sam Hughes. When I came back with a rifle that didn't have the blessing of his brother, the Minister of National Defence, he didn't think much of the idea but I made up my mind that the lives of my men were more important than getting into trouble with my Colonel.

NARRATOR:

On one occasion the Cavalry Brigade actually delivered Lee Enfields to the troops in the line.

JACOBS, A.G.:
LSHG

We had just come out and we were warned to be ready for a carrying party, the whole brigade, and we carried in Lee-Enfield rifles to the Infantry in the front line. And I had three Lee-Enfield rifles. I got into the line and it was a Scottish battalion. And I saw this kiltie up on the firing step so I said to him, "Hey, Jock, you want a Lee-Enfield rifle?", and he looked down in the half-light, unbelieving, grabbed it you see, picked up his own rifle, waved it round his head and slung it out to No Man's Land, and I was supposed to take back three Ross rifles.

NARRATOR:

Now for a time the Corps was to settle back into the dreary attrition of the trenches, the eroding life of watching and waiting --- harder to bear, in many ways, than the noise and slaughter of pitched battle.

ALLEY, H.R.:
3rd

I would say that the greatest difficulty that we had to contend with was monotony --- just utter bloody boredom. You never seemed to get anywhere. It just went on and on and on and on. At the end of a year and a half I had the feeling that it was sort of going on forever.

NARRATOR:

Next week, in Chapter 8 of "FLANDERS' FIELDS", the Canadians march south from the Salient to join in Haig's disastrous offensive on the Somme. They would not take part in the initial phase of the assault but the first Newfoundland Regiment moves off at 9.05 A.M. July 1st, against enemy machine guns near Beaumont-Hamel in one of the Great War's most heroic and tragic battles.

ANNOUNCER:

The first-person accounts of WORLD WAR I were researched, arranged and edited under the direction of Frank Lalor.

The series, originated by A. E. Powley, is written, narrated, and produced by J. Frank Willis.

NARRATOR:

The Somme was not a battle --- it was many battles fought on many days in many weeks which, taken together, constituted a major offensive by British arms and lasted from the 1st of July through November of 1916.

The Somme offensive had no precise geographic objective. There was a purpose. The purpose was threefold.

To relieve the intolerable pressure on the French Armies at Verdun;

To aid Allies on other fronts by pinning down a maximum German force and

To inflict as heavy losses as possible on the Armies of the enemy.

To these might be added the personal motive of Sir Douglas Haig who wished to convince the critics of his strategy that the Germans were not, in fact, invincible on the western front. (He eventually went a very long way toward proving that they were.)

By early summer of '16 the steady build-up of British arms and material in France had reached the proportions of a very formidable force indeed. Haig was now confident that British artillery could smash flat the enemy lines under a massive weight of shells; that his infantry could advance all but unopposed over the ground where the German armies lay buried. His plan would become operative on 1st July.

The Canadians would not take part in the initial phase of the offensive but the First Newfoundland (CONT)

NARRATOR:(CONT) Regiment, serving in the British 29th Division, moved off in the first assault on enemy positions on a one thousand yard front at 9.05 A.M., July 1st, near Beaumont-Hamel

HADOW, A.L.:

Royal Nfld.Regt.

On June the 30th at 9.15 P.M., we marched off from our billets in the village of Louvañcourt, 25 officers and 776 other ranks, and some eight miles to go to reach our assembly trench. We reached the communication trench at 12.15 midnight July 1st, but owing to the congestion in the area it took us two hours to reach our destination. There was continuous bombardment by our guns all the time and it's difficult to express what that noise was like, incessant cannon fire.

NARRATOR:

Many batteries of Canadian heavy artillery were also in action with the British Force.

LEACH R.J.:

Arty.Corps

During the preliminary bombardment, which was about ten days, I observed an average of 1,500 rounds a day from four guns. During that time it just looked as if the whole place was pulverized. The Hun didn't reply. We had one hostile shell in our battery during the ten days.

PARSONS, Charles:

Royal Nfld.Rgt.

The General told us that if all the shells were put on motor lorries they would extend about forty miles, so that will give you an idea of the number of shells that we threw at the enemy.

FROST, Syd.:

Royal Nfld.Rgt.

The troops were assured by all the commands that this was almost a walkover. They had bombarded for a week before, and all the wire was to have been destroyed, and there was tremendous confidence.

HADOW, A.L.:

Royal Nfld.Rgt.

The 29th Division, of which the Newfoundland Regiment formed a part, were allotted three objectives. For the first objective the Division would start off at 7.30 A.M. July 1st, the time set for the overall battle on the Somme to begin.

MORRY, Howard:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

It was a lovely morning and pretty quiet, but the very minute they got over the top, the very minute they started, well you wouldn't know what had happened. You couldn't see anything, only dust and smoke and shell bursting, and bits of rag and sticks and everything going up in the air. You couldn't see a thing, not a thing.

FROST, Syd.:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

The first wave went over early in the morning, 7.30. We did know that something had gone wrong. We didn't know quite what.

NARRATOR:

As so much did on the Somme it had all gone wrong from the start.

The effects of the ten-day bombardment had been wildly miscalculated.

PARSONS, Charles:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

The bombardment was intense but the Germans were very clever building dugouts. They had dugouts many feet below the surface and they were quite safe. All they had to do was to come up when the barrage had passed over and then their machine guns did the rest.

ROSS, J.W.:
4 Div.Arty.

They saved a great many lives, the deep dugouts. They were dug out of solid chalk. They would go down probably fifty or sixty feet, with steps, and underground. They were all dug out with caverns in there that would accommodate perhaps fifty or a hundred men.

FROST, Syd.:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

As soon as the shelling lifted they swarmed up out of these dugouts, and when the troops went in they had no barrage, no protective barrage of any kind to keep the enemy machine gunners down. It didn't work out at all.

LEACH, R.J.:
Arty. Corps.

One Division, the British 21st Division, on our front practically didn't get beyond their front line on the first day.

NARRATOR:

It had all gone wrong ---- yet on and on it went as though to multiply the casualties would, somehow, make it right.

Wave after hopeless wave of infantry moved off bent, relentlessly, on its own destruction.

HADOW, A.L.:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

The 88th Brigade, with our Battalion, was detailed for the third Objective, but this order was cancelled, and word came to us to deploy and attack the first objective instead of the third objective. At 9.15 A.M. on July 1st I gave the signal to advance. Then the leading line rose as one man and we started off.

GOODYEAR, Ken:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

We went over four abreast, sixty men all in line, down through the gaps that were cut in the barbed wire and, you see the thing is, the Germans had their machine guns trained exactly on those gaps. Those gaps was marked with white tape and rock. We were just sitting ducks, nothing more or less, but I'm going to tell you this, the boys did not falter one iota. They just marched into this thing as though they were going on parade, and they knew they were going to their deaths, the vast majority of them. As they came through from our own trench and into No Man's Land, they were all knocked over, knocked off.

FROST, Syd:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

To get through our own wire where gaps had been cut we had to form in single line in sections and, as they gathered into this formation, they were caught by machine guns and shells and everything else, and these gaps became clogged with dead and wounded men, and they either had to remove them or step over them or try to get through somewheres else.

PARSONS, Charles:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

I remember in one gap alone we counted sixty-six dead. Seventeen of us went over under Lieut. Miller and, at nightfall, there were but two of us left.

FROST, Syd.:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

Advancing in waves in broad daylight, at nine o'clock in the morning, with machine guns playing on you from all directions, it was just an impossible situation. Our Battalion was wiped out before we got to our own front line.

GOODYEAR, Ken.:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

I had sixty men in my bombing section. Among them was some of the finest men I ever knew. To give you an idea of just how devoted we were to each other, just prior to going over the top Paddy O'Brien, who was my Sergeant and one of the finest men that ever drew a breath of life, said to me, he said, "Sir!" he said, "You lead and we'll follow through hell and back." Well I took sixty men into hell. Three of us came out, Paddy O'Brien, Bern Forsey and myself.

FROST, Syd.:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

Even if it had been more successful when the troops would have arrived there, they were so loaded down with equipment they couldn't fight anyway. Each man carried probably fifty or sixty pounds on his back consisting of his share of the Bangalore torpedoes, picks and shovels and bombs, and ladders to scale the trenches, and bridges to cross them, and all these things. There was such a conglomeration of equipment and things on men's backs that they weren't in any condition to fight even if they got there.

HADOW, A.L.:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

The casualties I have noted in my diary for July 1st, 1916, total officers killed and wounded 26, other ranks killed and wounded 688. The Regiment was nearly wiped out.

GOODYEAR, Ken.:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

If the first two waves had taken their objective, well we would have had an easy mark taking ours, but seeing they got decimated the same way as we did, for the people at the top who knew the two battalions that had gone in front of us were decimated, why they sent us in, God knows, I don't. Well I suppose, you know, live and learn. But a lot of boys didn't live.

HADOW, A.L.:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

It was all worked out on paper beforehand, these three lines of attack and all that, but a lot of this Staff were inexperienced in the sense of not thoroughly knowing their job. It's easy to criticize afterwards, but in the First War the old Army tradition held good, i.e., the Army consisted of the Staff and the rest. The C.O. of a Battalion, in a sense, was inferior to any Staff Officer.

NARRATOR:

In the ivory tower of a rear echelon dream world, far from the reality of the trenches, some brass hat thought it would be helpful to affix a bright tin bull's-eye between every man's shoulder blades. Helpful to whom?

FROST, Syd.:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

They had a disc, a tin disc made out of biscuit tins, on each man's back so that the Intelligence Officers and the aeroplanes and so forth would see just where they were and distinguish our troops from enemy troops, and all this. This disc attached to his back, when he was wounded, if he turned over the disc would shine in the bright sunlight and snipers would get him, so he couldn't crawl in. He had to just wait there until dark and by that time a lot of these poor men had died.

NARRATOR:

Under the hot sun of July, the few that had got beyond their own wire lay out in No Man's Land.

GOODYEAR, Ken.:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

I got out into No Man's Land and I got hit by the place known as the Old Danger Tree. It was a sort of a landmark between the German trenches and our own and anybody who got there got killed or hit anyhow. I was hit about fifty feet to the left of that, and lying there in No Man's Land was just bullet going crazy, and shells flying, and men dying around you. You could smell blood like a slaughter house. My water bottle had been shot away and you know even before we went over we were thirsty. The thirst became intolerable almost, your tongue swollen in your mouth.

MORRY, Howard:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

Charlie Parsons and I we went out after night picking up the wounded and dead, you see. In the day you could hear fellows calling out for help out of the shellholes but once night fell they weren't calling out any more. An occasional fellow was off his head. You'd hear him moan, but most of the fellows kept very quiet, afraid the Germans would come over and shoot them, you see, and you had to crawl down the shellholes and feel around, feel whether a fellow was dead or living.

PARSONS, Charles:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

We brought in the wounded first if we found anyone alive, and the dead afterwards. We brought one chap in nearly a week after, but I don't know if he lived.

GOODYEAR, Ken.:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

Human life was so cheap. It was the most expendable of all military equipment. A horse or a mule had much more consideration paid to it than a soldier. I know, because when I came back and, being wounded, wasn't for active service, I was put back in charge of the Transport, and I know that there was more attention paid to a sick mule or a horse than died than to a human being that died. There was more questions asked.

O'DRISCOLL, J.:
Royal Nfld.Rgt.

The best of Newfoundland's manhood were killed that day, the men that really should be running the country today, because, as you know, they were volunteers, and the best people in any country are the volunteers, and they were the first people to be wiped out. It was a terrific calamity to Newfoundland.

NARRATOR:

A calamity indeed -- and not for Newfoundland alone.

A whole generation of leaders from France and Britain and Canada was being lost that summer in the fetid corridor of death that wound its way from Switzerland to the North Sea.

On August 30th the call went to the Canadians to move down from Flanders and on September 3rd under General Byng, they relieved the first Anzac Corps about Pozières.

LEE, J.H.:
PPCLI

We were told to pack our kits and we were moving some place, and we started down towards the Somme.

YOUNG, Gordon:
43rd

We left the Ypres area about the end of August and bussed for about twenty miles and marched the rest of the way, which took about approximately a week.

BROWN, Charles:
4th

We were billeted in Albert overnight. We were soaking wet. It rained the last twenty-one miles march we had. It rained and poured, and we moved into these billets, and we burned pianos and everything just to get dry.

STEVENS, Charles:
20th

We arrived at this Albert and we marched into a brick field. "This is where you bunk tonight, boys," in the middle of this field. Nights were getting chilly. An open field didn't look very comforting but it doesn't take a fellow long before he knows how to dig a hole in the ground and scrounge a piece of corrugated iron and hang his water-proof sheet in front, and two of you crowd in there and keep each other warm.

HOLMES, C.B.:
25th

The first thing everybody looked at, there was a church there, and there was a statue of the Virgin leaning over. It had been hit by shell fire and everybody looked at that of course because the rumour was that when that fell the war would end.

CAUNT, T.G.:
8th

It wasn't likely to fall off because I and another chap thought we should investigate this, and we climbed up and it was tied on with steel cables.

LEE, J.H.:
PPCLI

The Virgin was at the top of the Cathedral, and it was a landmark for everybody that fought around the Somme.

KIDD, Canon W.E.:
21st

I'll always remember her, always have remembered the feeling we had, as if she was just there extending her blessing to us. On Sunday we had a wonderful service on the brick yards, a Brigade Communion Service, and it was always very impressive in my memory. We went along long lines of men as we administered the elements and they knelt down to receive and knelt there while they said a prayer, and on the evening of that day we marched in to take our battle positions.

ALLEY, H.R.:
3rd

We went in at Pozières which the Australians had just taken. The attack was over and successful but the German was constantly counter-attacking. We had him there, you see, where he had us at Mount Sorrel. We were on top of the Ridge and everything down below was in plain view and he didn't like it.

NARRATOR:

On September 15th, in accordance with Haig's plan, the Battle of Flers-Courcellette would be joined. It was to be a two-army assault on a ten mile front. The Canadian objective was to secure, in and around Courcellette, points of observation.

The date is memorable for two things -- the application of a new technique in artillery support of attacking infantry, the creeping barrage, and the initial employment of a completely new engine of war, the armoured

(CONT)

NARRATOR:(CONT)

tank, representing the end of a long quest for a "Machine-gun-destroyer" that could negotiate enemy barbed wire, trenches and strong points. Of 28 tons dead-weight, 26 feet long, 14 feet wide and $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, it was a secret weapon that could not be hid for long.

LEE, J.H.:
PPCLI

There'd been a couple of chaps in our Company who had wandered off the night before and they had had a few bottles of beer, and they came back pretty well pie-eyed, and they talked about these oomph-oomph-oomphs that they saw, and we didn't know what the dickens they were talking about.

STEVENS, Charles:
20th

Naturally we were interested and a number of us go down into Albert and sure enough there's these steel monsters covered up with tarps and camouflaged, and we got talking to the English crew. One lad said to me, "What do you think the Boche will think when he sees these coming over?" "Well," I said, "I don't know," I said. "I go over with a tin hat." I said, "You're going over in a steel box but," I said, "don't forget if that steel box don't keep moving," I says, "You get to hell out." So he said, "Well, what do you really think?" "Oh," I said, "he'll be scared to hell."

NARRATOR:

On September 15th at 6.20 A.M. the guns roared, the tanks revved up and rumbled forward. The assault began.

SMITH, Sid.:
18th

The Commanding Officer of each Company had their orders, and when that whistle blew everybody went over.

BRYDEN, C.V.:
31st

The Germans pinned our Company down at that time. A German machine gunner kept clipping bullets over our head, and we laid there for a little while until I heard a tank approaching from the rear and we were instructed when we wanted the tanks to do anything to place our helmet on top of our bayonet and point in the direction that we wanted the tank to go, and the tank passed us and he took care of the German machine gunners that was holding us off very efficiently, and I believe the Heinie machine gunner held the gun down until the tank ran over it.

SCOTT, G.:
29th

We were on a kind of a shoulder where we could be enfiladed from a spot on the left. So we took to shell holes. The chap on my right, he suddenly yelled, "Come on, let's go over", and he just got his head over the shell hole before he had it. The rest of us who weren't so brave sat tight and just at this time came the first tank that ever came into action. It went over past us, got astride the German line, and then we could see nothing but hands up over the top of the trench, and we casually walked in.

SMITH, Sid.:
18th

Our first objective was the Sugar Refinery. It was just a little building on a height that we had to get onto so that we could command a view of the enemy. It had been bombed and blown to smithereens but still that was our objective, you see, and we made it. In fact, all the Canadian battalions, I don't think any of them missed their objective.

BRYDEN, C.V.:
31st

Well, without the tanks there's no question but what we'd have suffered far greater casualties, and the moral effect of the tanks on the German soldiers at that time undoubtedly lent itself a great deal to the success of the attack.

SMITH, Sid.:
18th

When those tanks came over they were really something.

POPE, M.A.:

They were spitting fire. You'd see them flashing and you just wondered what on earth was going over the ground. It was quite a thrilling sight seeing the tanks going in for the first time.

SMITH, Sid.:
18th

A lot of them got bogged down, of course, but they still had the fire power, and one thing they did have was the matter of putting the wind up the enemy. Heinies ran like hell when they saw them coming.

SCOTT, G.:
29th

It was an absolute surprise and shock to the Germans and it was a surprise and shock to us, 'cause there was never a secret so well guarded as the tanks. We had heard that there was such a thing but we frankly didn't believe it.

NARRATOR:

The tanks were not Canadian armor, but a few individual Canadians were serving with them that day.

FRASER, James:
4th

My tank, the "Maple Leaf", there was a New Zealander and three Englishmen, an English Lieutenant and myself. We went on through to the Sugar Refinery, knocked the wall in at the Sugar Refinery and then we just came around back and started to go up again when we got ours. They were hit by a nine-two. They hit the turret.

NARRATOR:

Before that morning ended every one of the tanks had been knocked out. These earliest examples of the land battleship concept were lumbering, awkward and all but unmanageable.

MITCHELL, Robert:
24th

We thought it was grand at first to march behind the tanks, but then the enemy concentrated on knocking those tanks out so it wasn't funny any more. We dodged them after that.

McKAY, J.F.:
28th

I had a man who used to be in my platoon, and he was always volunteering for different kinds of jobs that he thought might get him where it wasn't quite so hot, you know, and he thought the tanks would be water tanks for water supplies behind the lines or something like this and he volunteered. When he heard what the job was, it was to walk ahead of the tanks and move wounded men out of the line of fire so the tanks wouldn't run over them. It wasn't what he expected at all.

NARRATOR:

Brigadier-General Ross, then commanding the 28th had every right to complain eleven days later when, thanks to the tanks he found himself in the middle of the bull's eye.

ROSS, Alex.:

The beastly tank started an hour ahead of zero and then, having got going, he stalled on the top of my dugout and therefore the enemy had a perfect target for my dugout.

GARDNER, B.C.:
43rd

They couldn't have used them at a worse place because it was swampy, marshy land, and it had been fought over, and tremendous shell holes all over the place. They never should have used them there the first time.

NARRATOR:

Despite their many faults they had made a great contribution to one of the few successful battles of the Somme offensive, and the Canadians swept on to the village of Courcellette.

HOLMES, C.B.:
25th

The Fourth Brigade was to attack the Sugar Refinery the morning of the 15th, and we weren't to go over until the morning of the 16th, but they got along so fast, much faster than they thought they would that it was decided that we would jump over in the evening around 6 o'clock. So we just moved up in front there. The trenches were blown to pieces just at that point and just laid out on the ground in different parts, you know, different companies, until the zero hour, and then we went through. We followed the barrage. The 22nd was on our right and the P.P.C.L.I.'s was on the left.

ANDERSON, H. deB.:
25th

We got up to this stone wall in Courcellette and the Colonel held us up for three minutes to allow the barrage to lift, and Cecil Weir and I, we had seen this dugout and we got down in there, and he got a box of cigars and I got a bottle of cognac, and we come up, and we come right in front of where the Colonel was, you see, and we each had a cigar in our mouth, and we passed the cigar box to the Colonel, and he took a handful of cigars and then put us both under arrest for smoking on parade.

MacGREGOR, F.:
25th

There was very little street fighting at Courcellette. There was heavy gun fire going through it. When our guns lifted the Germans started pounding in some stuff.

ANDERSON, H. deB.:
25th

We were supposed to take Courcellette town and dig in at the other end of the town, but there was quite a grade up, oh maybe fifty yards the other side, so the Colonel took us up the top of this hill, you see, and we dug in there.

MacGREGOR, F.:
25th

There was a gap between us and the Princess Pats, but everything was secured before dark, and all we done all that night was sit tight.

NARRATOR:

Thousands were to give their lives or suffer wounds holding the new front line or in repeated attempts to exploit the gains of September 15th. The taking of Courcellette had been deceptively easy as compared to the task of holding it. The Germans counter-attacked with fierce determination; the shelling was persistent and heavy. Lt. Col. T. L. Tremblay, Commanding the 22nd Regiment, wrote in his diary for the 15th.....
"If hell is as bad as what I have seen at Courcellette, I would not want my worst enemy to go there."

In the week September 15th to 22nd, Canadian casualties numbered 7,230.

There were no cheap victories on the Somme.

BRYDEN, C.V.:
31st

The price that we paid for Courcellette was a horrible price. When we went back to the brick field they even had to put the reinforcements in the Battalion before they dared to call the roll. I think there was only 14 men in the Company left.

NARRATOR:

For two more months the Somme offensive would continue, inching forward, foot by foot and yard by yard and buying each advance with scores and hundreds of human lives.

On September 26th the Canadians attacked again in the Battle of Thiepval Ridge that gave Canadian names to

(CONT)

NARRATOR:(CONT)

a maze of trenches ... Regina Trench ... Kenora Trench ... Sudbury Trench. The deepest and strongest the men had ever seen.

FLEMONS, R.G.:
31st

Our objective was on a slight eminence, in a commanding position to watch everything that came along.

DWAN, J.:
15th

We just got in the line and somebody says, "Away you go." So boy, we started.

FLEMONS, R.G.:
31st

We were told we had 250 yards to go and there were no buildings, no tree stumps. There was nothing between us and the German line, and we were really tied up in knots. And then we had the word to go over the top and I remember, "Well, I don't feel afraid." Directly you got moving you didn't feel afraid, partly because your other boys were there too. And you were taking the same chances they were and they were taking the same chances as you.

DWAN, J.:
15th

You forget all about the war. All you do is look up. You don't even see the dead fellows laying on the ground. The ground is just bouncing in front of you and you just keep moving.

FLEMONS, R.G.:
31st

Every now and then you'd see a man fall. The others would keep on going, going, going, just as though they were on parade, rifles at the trail, and walking, not running, walking, so calm and collected. I thought that was the most glorious thing.

CAUNT, T.G.:
8th

As we went by the Zollern Redoubt, he was playing machine guns on us, going over the first wave. However, the first wave got past and quite a few prisoners were taken. The idea was to get Regina Trench, but unfortunately, we didn't take enough care because many of these chaps that we had taken prisoners, they went back into their guns again and turned their guns on our backs and on the front of our second wave, and there weren't any more prisoners taken because we lost a lot of men through this action.

NARRATOR: The attack on the 26th bore little resemblance to the successful battle of the 15th. On October 1st they would try again - - - this time against heavy German wire and an enemy well dug in at Regina Trench.

MacGREGOR, F.:
25th

We were told that the wire was cut. And I think this report of the wire being cut came from the Reconnaissance Air Force, so we went in then. Well, that was the end of us all for a long time. When we got up there there was fifty feet thick of barbed wire uncut. There were a lot of big shell holes, and you just jumped in that. We couldn't go back. Suicide to go back. Wide open. When darkness came word was passed to go back to where we came from and try and pick our wounded and bring them along. The dead were left there. So we did. We came out and we were very well cut to pieces. I had twenty-three men and one Corporal out of a company of over a hundred men. Machine gun fire was what mowed us down most.

NARRATOR: These attacks were beginning to develop a rhythm and a tempo.

First, the supporting battalion of the Brigade would go out into No Man's Land, in the dark of night, and prepare the jumping-off positions for the assaulting force.

BARCLAY, R.G.:
PPCLI

And we weren't going in on the attack. We were in support and the night before the troops were going over we had to supply a working party to dig what they called the jumping-off trench in front of the main line of trenches, closer to the Germans. It wasn't very wide. It wasn't too deep and, of course, it would be evacuated first thing in the morning before the Germans really saw it. You simply drew a straight trench, filled it full of troops, and then they bunged off first thing in the morning.

STEVENS, Charles:
20th

Now this attacking force, what we called the first wave, had to leave the front line and line up to tapes. So many men, so many paces apart so that you wouldn't have a mob. You'd have a fairly disciplined group. And then back of them there'd be the second wave and the third wave. Now it's a leap-frog proposition. The first wave goes so far and the second wave leap-frog through them and so on, till they reach their objective, and the third wave it does the same. And then, after the third wave has reached its objective, if it's lucky and gets there, that's when the digging in takes place. The idea then is turn the German parados and it becomes your parapet. In other words, what was at the back of the German soldier when he was facing you is now your parapet and you're facing onto where you expect a counter-attack.

NARRATOR:

Before the assault was launched the artillery would lay down a crushing bombardment on the enemy trenches - - - to smash defences and destroy the wire entanglements.

The infantry, at times, regarded all this with a jaundiced eye.

FOWLIE, A.:
49th

When we went in we were much bothered with our 8 inch howitzers. One gun was firing short. I got hold of Murray, who was commanding the Company and he said, "What's the trouble, men?" I said, "Well, we don't mind cleaning up this trench, but get that gun to lift off us." "Well," he said, "I sent down", he said, "about that and a message came back, 'we can't stop the guns'. The wire has to be cut." Well, when we went over of course the wire wasn't cut at all.

McKay, J. Keiler:
2 Div. Arty.

My heart breaks even today when I think of the brave young men that I have seen hanging on wire, held up in the wire and of course machine gunned by the enemy, but the task of cutting this wire was wellnigh impossible under the conditions then prevailing.

HIGGINS, D.C.:
4 Div. Arty.

We knew, at that time, that you could not control your Battery with any accuracy, for two reasons: One, that the guns were wearing very rapidly and very badly; and the other, that the ammunition was a bloody mess. For example, at that time we were getting 45 howitzer ammunition with three types of fuses, three weights, two different driving bands and three different charges. It was being brought up and dumped at night by the drivers who had packsacks over their saddles, and frequently it got wet and most of the time the cardboard top came off the charge, allowing the moisture to get into the propellant.

NARRATOR:

There was a great mass of artillery support available by now but it still lacked the pinpoint accuracy that would come only with training, greater experience and more reliable ammunition.

The infantry, too, had a lot to learn about how best to take advantage of a creeping barrage.

RUSSENHOLT, E.:
44th

We hadn't yet mastered the technique of getting ideas over to masses of men. I remember how they tried to tell us about a barrage of artillery fire, and a great number of the boys thought that the shells were so thick they'd prevent the enemy's bullets from coming through, and this sort of thing. The training was very faulty.

SMITH, Sid.:
18th

I would say that the German army at that time were probably better trained than our men but our men hadn't been regimented like the German army and I think that one fact made our boys think for themselves and do the right thing. I remember one instance particularly on the Somme. The Sergeant of my Platoon he kept calling us to come on, come on, and I yelled to him and I said, "Sergeant Stone," I said, "if you walk into that barrage you're certainly going to be killed." You had to stay within a certain distance of that barrage otherwise you'd had it. Now he was too anxious, and he walked right into it and just dropped. I've had several lads tell me, and it's a funny thing, I didn't realize that I was doing this, but several la

(CONT)

SMITH, Sid.: (cont)
18th

told me, they said, "You know, you saved all our lives on the Somme by insisting that we watch that barrage and didn't walk right into it." And I was just a private then.

NARRATOR:

Before major attacks, a percentage of the officers and N.C.O.'s were now left out of the action. Should the regiment be decimated, they would serve as a nucleus of trained leaders for the reinforcements.

KEELER, C.P.:
49th

Senior N.C.O.'s, like sergeants, the Sergeant-Major and Company Officers, including the second in command of the Company, and the Company Commander, they would take turns. They come to toss for Sergeants, and it come to a young fellow by the name of Tucker from Calgary, married man with four children, but he was to go. So I said to Tucker, I says, "Alright, Sergeant Tucker," I said, "you stay back and I'll go. But Sergeant Tucker wouldn't hear of it, so I stayed out for six hours. Then the telephone message came for me to get up there. When I got up there all Officers but one were knocked out, wounded and killed. The Company Sergeant-Major was killed. Five Sergeant were killed, four Sergeants were wounded, and I never saw such a bloody mess in my life. Bodies here there and everywhere. It must have been about four o'clock in the morning when we arrived. There was our boys still engaging in bayonet fighting and they couldn't see who the hell they were fighting. Well I finally found Company Headquarters to report and Company Headquarters was nothing, just the Company Commander. He was the only one left and I remember him saying, "I'm glad you are here, Keeler," he sayd, "we are going ahead again." I says, "How many men have you got, sir?" He says, "Oh I might have twenty." "Twenty," I says, "Where are you going?" "I'm going to take that trench." We passed the word along with runners and we finally went after this trench, Regina Trench, but we never got anywhere. Though we fought with everything we had as far as I was concerned, in "C" Company of the 49th, I didn't even see Regina Trench. Regina Trench to us was a dead loss.

NARRATOR:

Some units did see Regina Trench - if only briefly. Bit by bit the German positions were nibbled away -- lengths of Regina Trench taken, lost, taken again.

THOMAS, William:
4th

We took Regina Trench about five o'clock on that morning and he drove us out again in the afternoon. We couldn't get anything back to the artillery and we ran out of Mills grenades and, when he counter-attacked, well we had just our rifles, and he certainly gave it to us.

NARRATOR:

For another month the adversaries hammered at each other. No man was safe on the Somme. The men in the transport sections were as vulnerable as the men in the line.

WILSON, R.:
5th

We were sent in with ammunition to take up to the battalions in action, and the Germans were shelling the road steadily. We were somewhere close to the Sugar Refinery when a shell burst underneath the entire outfit I was with, and my wounds were in both legs. The artery was blown out of the left leg and the main nerve was torn. However, the rest of the outfit, they had continued on with their mission and one or two of the wounded managed to get back to Battalion Headquarters and notified them of the wounded men lying out, and they didn't find us until just before daylight, before the attack opened up.

NARRATOR:

In front of the German barbed wire, hundreds of wounded men fought their lonely personal battles, their hand-to-hand struggles with death, each in his own way.

FOWLIE, A.:
49th

We went over just at the crack of dawn but when we got down towards the trench there was the wire and there was the trench, and we couldn't get through the wire,

(CONT)

FOWLIE, A.: (cont)

so we had to hunt for what cover we could get, and right in front of me was one of these holes made by our big howitzers. There wasn't much room in it, and I was digging like mad to get my feet down and our own shrapnel, some of it, was still coming over and falling short. In fact, one of them hit me in the foot and I got away for six months to Blighty over that. But just over to my left I noticed this fellow Collins lying on the slope and I shouted, "Come along in here." And just as he got up I saw the cloth of his putty fly and he flopped over towards me and I grabbed him and hauled him in. Well I tore his putty and got his pant leg up and saw the hole. Well I used my first field dressing, of course, fixed it up. So there we were all day. Well, as soon as it got dark I became aware of a figure in front. I whispered a challenge, you see, and he whispered back, and here was old Jock Hutchison of the 15th Platoon. He said, "Can you get out?" I said, "Yes, I can crawl out," but, I said, "I can't pack Collins. If I took his rifle and strapped his leg to the rifle I'd have to pack him on my back, crawling, and the leg would drag and it would practically kill him, you see, the pain. He had to be moved on a stretcher." "So please," I said, "get two men and a stretcher and come back." "Alright, Fowlie," he said, "I'll do that." Well I waited and waited. Collins would swoon off for a while and then he would pick up and call me by name, and I'd give him a little water.

At one o'clock in the morning he said, "Fowlie, you go in and get somebody to come out and fetch me." Well I argued with him a while and I took all the biscuits and bully that I had, emergency rations, and I packed them all beside him because you never know about these things, and two water bottles. I said, "Now you can reach those, Collins." He says, "Yeah, that's all right now," he said, "that's fine." So away I went. I got back to the trench. Some of the 42nd in there, and I got hold of this Captain Matheson, and he told me he couldn't do anything because he had only forty men and he said, "You know, I'm liable to be attacked any minute," he said. "There's nothing between us and the Germans except their own wire." He said, "Can you make it out?" I said, "Oh yes, I can make it out." So I crawled over to the sunken road to our own Regimental Aid Post and the ambulance men brought up a little truck. So they packed me on to that and took me out. The last effort I made for poor old Collins was at "K" dump. Dad Carnell was our Quartermaster-Sergeant, a fine old fellow, Klondiker. They had the cook kitchen pitched there, right at "K" dump. So I called to

(CONT)

FOWLIE, A.L(cont)

Dad and he came over. He said, "Fowlie," he said, "you badly hit?" I said, "No, hell, I just got a scratch but," I said, "there's a man up there." I gave him the instructions how to find this man.

ROBERTS, A.E.:
49th

That night the H.Q. details, you know, the band and that, they came up to collect up the wounded and a German officer came out and said, "You're looking for your wounded? Come along and I'll show you." So he took these fellows around and showed them where our wounded were, and the Germans had dressed them, you know, and they were a very decent lot.

BROWN, Charles:
4th

My first dressing was put on by a German Sergeant, a German Army Medical Corps Sergeant. He tied my arm up, put a tourniquet on, and he says, "There you are, Canada," in very good English. "That'll do until they find you. I've got to hurry up and get out of here," he said, "I'll be caught myself." I remember him saying that to me, and you'd think that he was one of your own friends.

NARRATOR:

Some men lay out for days.

BROWN, Charles:
4th

I was wounded on the afternoon of the 8th. My file shows me as being wounded on the 12th of October. That was the day I was picked up, you see. I remember being conscious and my water bottle had disappeared. I could visualize water taps that you just turned a cap on to get all the water you wanted. Instead of that I had a pebble in my mouth, you know. My arm was blown and the elbow was blown right out. I had a badly wounded leg too. I had shrapnel in my leg and I was a bit of a mess, that's all.

PARSONS, M.E.:
2 C.M.R.

We moved into Mouquet Farm. We found three Australians that were out in No Man's Land for eleven days. One was wounded. The other two couldn't move and he fed these fellows by going around to the dead to get their iron rations and feeding them. These lads found them and brought them in.

BROWN, Charles:
4th

I remember being picked up by a scout party of the 8th Battalion from Winnipeg. They came out into No Man's Land with a white flag, and then the most God-awful part of the war as far as I was concerned began right there, and then riding in an ambulance drawn by mules across shellholes to an advanced casualty clearing station which was a large marquee, and in there nurses and doctors were almost at the point of exhaustion. They said, "Too bad boy, we've got to take that arm off." I says, "You're not going to take my arm off." "Oh, yes." So I guess I went in on the operating table and that was it. That was my end of the war.

NARRATOR:

Many a man's war ended on the Somme - in one way or another - and many a man's began on the night of 2nd October when the 4th Canadian Division left the Ypres Salient and marched south. They arrived on the Somme October 10th. On the 17th the first three Divisions were relieved and moved to a so-called quiet area about Lens and Arras. They were not unhappy to be going out.

POPE, M.A.:

I had an old sailor. He said he had varicose veins and we had the dickens of a time keeping him up in the march going in but I noticed there was never a whimper out of him when we were marching out. It's much easier to march out than to march in.

NARRATOR:

Still apart from the first three Divisions the 4th was to bring the Canadian Corps to its final strength and shape.

MARSHALL, W.M.:
46th

By the time we got down to the Somme and became active the heavy fighting was all behind us. All we saw was the decimated remains of other Battalions coming out. One Battalion was thirty-seven men behind the O.C.

HINES, H.:
72nd

We were marching into a place called Warloi and we were notified that the 16th Battalion of the First Division was coming up the road and we lined the road to give them a cheer, because the 16th was formed, half of it, from the 72nd Regiment, which also formed us. Well we saw them coming around the bend of the road. There was no cheering. There wasn't 110 men in the whole outfit.

SCOTT, Stewart:
78th

We sure didn't like what we saw. Battalions commanded by subalterns, and what were units of company strength were battalions, so we were sobered.

SWANSON, C.:
102nd

Before we went in for this show we had to go in and look the whole situation over, a bunch of us kids. We had to find the front line, find the support trenches, find the Company dugouts, and find landmarks if there were any, and make a note on them, and then when you came out you drew sort of a diagram of where you were going and you showed your officers this and each runner had his own section and he took his Company, showed them where the front line was and give them an idea where Fritzies front line was, and then we'd retire to Headquarters dugout, if there was such a thing. So we went up Pozieres Road to the big communications trench and we had to go across what we called Death Valley, which was Death Valley too. The 16th had been in ahead of us and they had got pretty badly shot up and this trench was literally filled with bodies of 16th Canadian Scottish, and the only way we could get through this trench was walking on top of them or climb out over the top, which wasn't permissible. It was too hot. The machine gun fire was terrific. It was rather sickening to begin with but an old-timer said, "You might as well step on them, you can't hurt them any more." So that was our first baptism.

CROWE, R.:
72nd

It was pretty bad. It really give you quite a shock. We went in to take over the old Regina Trench but the old Regina Trench was so battered that it couldn't be occupied and we were told to dig in, and we had to get down out of sight by morning, and I can tell you that there was no need to tell the boys to get to work because, you know, they had to get down far enough that they could at least duck down before daylight.

SWANSON, C.:
102nd

I had never been under fire, and these shells were just exploding in mass. I could see fellows getting down in the shellholes this side of me, a fellow jumping in this side of me, so I thought, "Well, they're getting down, what the hell am I standing here for?" So I get down too and I shook this fellow and I said, "Come on now. Do you think we ought to go now?" And I'd shake the other fellow and there was no response. These were casualties. Then I kind of became panic-stricken. I'm all alone. Well here's this bunch of Germans coming and I was really scared, but some of them started getting down on their knees and they were yelling, "England, England, Kamerad." The troops that had gone on over had taken their objective and then gathered up these prisoners and turned them loose to make their own way to back of our own lines. I began to get a little courage, but I'm still lost, I don't know where the Battalion's gone, so I marched these prisoners and show them the way back to Battalion Headquarters. I'm brave now because all these Germans are unarmed, and I get credit for bringing in the first prisoners, and I went back to the Company with a message, and the Sergeant up there, he says, "Swanson," he says, "where in so and so have you been?" He says, "We've been looking all over hell for you."

NARRATOR:

For the men who fought there, the two indelible memories of the Somme are of blood and mud. The mud became really oppressive later on. The rains became torrential in October and the Fourth Division was to feel the full effect.

PANET, E. deB.:

Shortly after our arrival on the Somme the rains started falling. Rain, rain, rain, every day. It was terrific. The first three weeks on the Somme the Fourth Canadian Division experienced sixteen days of rain. The state of the trenches were indescribable. In some places the men were knee-deep in mud. Bad weather brought repeated postponements of further action.

BROWN, Bob.:
46th

Twice when we went in the line they issued us hip boots, rubber boots, and I have seen fellows get stuck in the mud so bad that if two others pulled them out they'd leave the boots sticking in the mud and pull him right out of his boots.

CAUNT, T.G.:
8th

The whole country had been torn up with gun fire since July 1st. There wasn't a blade of grass. The thing that impresses you about the Somme was the utter devastation, the noise and, above all, the smell. You couldn't bury anyone because they were constantly blown up again. The smell was beyond all belief.

PANET, E. deB.:

The difficulty of supplying the men was tremendous. Some had to walk as far as eight miles before they got to the front lines. The Pozières Road was used as far as possible for wheeled transport, but as one got nearer the front line the road simply disappeared in the mud and craters, and everything, rations, supplies, ammunition, had to be carried by men and pack mules.

JACK, Alex. W.:
54th

We always went in and came out at night. We always got lost. There were no landmarks. The mud was more or less knee-deep, or worse, and of course we were always carrying heavy weights, Lewis guns, ammunition, bombs and so forth. And the troops generally arrived in the line in an exhausted condition.

NARRATOR:

While much of the heaviest fighting was over when the Fourth Division went in there were units that would taste disaster to the dregs and find the cup as bitter as any who had gone before. As an example of this no Battalion suffered more than the 44th on that 25th October.

RUSSENHOLT, E.:
44th

We went in on the night of the 23rd. We were to attack on the morning of the 24th, and the mud was so terrible that about every other step you know you had to take hold of your rubber boot to pull your foot out and you were carrying on your back all the things that you would need, extra bombs and all this sort of stuff.

NARRATOR:

Strange that youth should always think the rendezvous with death was made for someone else. Full of bright hope, and joy in the high adventure of it all, they would get up and go to the battle no matter what.

ROBINSON, J.:

44th

I was in the hospital with trench fever and another kid and I got out and climbed over the fence, you know. Then we went back to the base, you know, and they were all going in to go over the top, and I had a fever, and the Sergeant-Major says, "You can't go." So, I was just a kid and I sneaked away and ran around and met the Battalion in the trenches.

GOODALL, T.:

44th

It was cancelled that day. We was to go in the morning. It was cancelled till the following morning.

RUSSENHOLT, E.:

44th

We sat in those funk-holes, and in the muck of those jumping-off trenches all that day, all the next night, and until the morning of the 25th.

GOODALL, T.:

44th

When the barrage started up the following morning we was to get over the top. About five o'clock in the morning we was all lined up there ready for the jump-off. All we heard was one shell. That was all the artillery we got. Alright, that's the barrage, let's go.

McLEOD, S.N.:

44th

But that was all entirely due to inexperience. The fellows never would have started over the top if they had actually known what a barrage was.

RUSSENHOLT, E.:

44th

We were always of the opinion that somehow the orders hadn't got back to the artillery people. The number of shells that came over during the time that they were to fire was entirely inadequate. But even if there had been a heavy barrage, the staff responsible for the plan, for all practical purposes had failed to appreciate the defence system of the enemy, particularly the quadrilateral, a group of machine gun posts in the German defence system. And it was very strong. It

(CONT)

RUSSENHOLT, E.:(cont) was over to our flank and this was where the machine gun fire came from so that it swept enfilade, not direct but obliquely across our line of advance.

GOODALL, T.:
44th

I was in the leading platoon going over and the machine gun fire was terrific. All we could do was to get down and crawl. I said, "Boys," I says, "no use," I says. "Make for a shellhole." There was five of us got in that shellhole.

RUSSENHOLT, E.:
44th

As the line went ahead the line would just topple down, down, down, to the end of the traverse.

GOODALL, T.:
44th

The Company Commander, he was on our left, and I seen him get it. I didn't know whether he was killed or whether he was wounded. Couldn't help nobody, just a case of stay put. We was pinned down. We lay in that shellhole all that day till it got dusk at night, and I think half of the Battalion was killed and wounded. It was a real mistake some place.

ROBINSON, J.:
44th

We got about, oh 150 yards I suppose, and they start falling around me like wheat, and I crawled into this shellhole. Another guy crawled in and you know that by about seven o'clock there was seven of us in there, and we laid there all day long with our nose right to the ground, you know, and every time one of them would jump up to run back, you know, he'd be sniped, you see, because they were on a hill, you see. They could see us and any movement, bang, the snipers was on us.

GOODALL, T.:
44th

Night come. I says, "Alright," I says, "you fellows go back to the front line," and I says, "I'm going to go over and see if I can find the Company Commander." I had an idea where he was. I gets over there in the dark. There he was still alive. "Now," I says, "you give me time to get back to the front line," I says. "I'll come back with a stretcher-bearer," I says. "You take that flashlight," and, I said, "give it three blinks." Went back and got the stretcher-bearer. We wasn't long in No Man's Land there till I seen this flashlight. I says, "That's him." Away we went. We got him on a stretcher, got him carried back.

NARRATOR:

The giant meat grinder that was the Somme offensive slowed to a stop in the rain of November 19th and in the monstrous ooze of static trench-lines the Fourth Division stood until November 28th.

All four Divisions of the Corps had served with distinction -- the Fourth Division no less than the hard-bitten First. With unshakeable determination they had won their way slowly, inexorably, forward . . and the price had been exorbitant.

24,029 Canadians became casualties on the Somme to gain a few yards of sodden, shell-pocked ground.

It left a bitter taste in the mouth.

ODLUM, V.W.:

The Somme ran for months without a break. It was going all the time, all the time. It wasn't pleasant and nobody thought anything was being accomplished. A little bit of a mark on a map for the success of the day. It was discouraging that way.

BROWN, Bob.:
46th

It seemed so senseless to us that had to climb through the mud, to go through all this just for the sake of sitting three hundred yards away from where we were the day before.

RUSSENHOLT, E.:
44th

It was utter confusion. They talk about the fog of battle. It was the fog of battle in its worst. We went through an experience that was the result of not knowing the job. I say that at all levels.

STEVENS, G.L.:
PPCLI

The Somme operation, for all British troops, was the moment of truth. We went into the Somme in the same spirit of dedication as the earlier battles, and we came out with a bad taste in our mouths. There was no question about that. On the opening day of the Somme the cream of Kitchener's Army had been destroyed for advances of a few hundred yards, and before we'd got there the Lancashire troops in particular were talking

(CONT)

STEVENS, G.L.:(cont)
PPCLI

about their Generals in terms which I couldn't give you over a respectable microphone. We were never as disillusioned as the British troops were. Whether that was some dourness in Canadians I don't know, but before we reached the Somme we were told that colossal mistakes were being made that we were paying for in blood.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.

We had the cream of the British Empire slaughtered on the Somme. It was the deathknell of one of the finest armies ever mustered together, and I believe that that army, in the proper place, in the proper time, could have beaten any other, won any battle - but not the Somme. Not against that tremendous fortress. Dug-in emplacements that you couldn't see until you stumbled on them. You couldn't knock them out or anything like that and, by God, you just wondered how you ever got through.

McKAY, Keiler J.:
2 Div. Arty.

They called it the steamroller. One trench was taken and another trench and another trench, as if it were opening the door every four or five or six days at colossal cost, and not developing or exploiting the situation which obtained after the door was opened.

ODLUM, V.W.:

The area was so big, so unpleasant, that those who were running the operation could not go and see, and those of us who were carrying out the operation, we had to live in it. Those higher up can always see a clean map. The man who works in the mud can never see a clean map, so there was a difference in their viewpoint.

CUNNINGHAM, M.J.:
43rd

The generalship over there at that time was the most stupid damn thing that you could possibly conceive of. They were battering away at the strongest portion of the German line and they had the same mentality as the Chinese have right today with their six hundred million. They can lose two hundred million. The way these Generals figured I shall never know. It was absolutely criminal; they ought to have been court-martialled.

POPE, M.A.:

It was a gruelling business. Blood and corruption everywhere. I think most of us were off our feed. None of us bothered to eat red meat for a little while after we came out of the Somme.

STEVENS, G.R.:
PPCLI

While we had a great success on our opening day because it was the first day the tanks were used in the attack on Courcellette, the follow-up battles at Regina Trench were failures, to put it mildly, and everyone then realized that there was something missing in our scheme of things. We were losing men that we shouldn't lose simply because of bad timing, faulty organization, wrong weapons and other factors which simply meant that, in comparison with the enemy, we were still an experimental formation.

NARRATOR:

In totting up his accounts Sir Douglas Haig was pleased to observe "The three main objectives have been achieved. Verdun has been relieved; the main German forces have been held on the Western front; the enemy's strength has been very considerably worn down."

On that last point Mr. Winston Churchill observed that British casualties outnumbered German losses 2.3 to 1. Mr. Lloyd George, in his memoirs, says "Our losses were twice as great as those we inflicted", while the Editor of Sir Douglas Haig's private papers sums it all up as "A costly failure which did far more damage to the Allied than to the German cause."

Next week we shall hear how the following five months saw the beginning of a transformation that would change the Canadians in the field from an "experimental formation" to a Corps d'Élite.
Next week . . . VIMY RIDGE.

ANNOUNCER;

The first-person account of WORLD WAR I were researched, arranged and edited under the direction of Frank Lalor.

The series, originated by A. E. Powley, is written, narrated and produced by J. Frank Willis.

ANNOUNCER:

Ladies and Gentlemen; "FLANDERS' FIELDS", Chapter 9,
"THE BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE".

HOME, W.J.:
R.C.R.

After the Somme we moved out and went by route march back up to the Vimy Ridge area, just north of Arras, and we spent the whole of that winter up on what they called the Crater Line which was right on the Ridge.

NARRATOR:

No other Battlefield in France is so sacred to the memory of the Canadian Corps as the shell-scarred slopes of Vimy Ridge. Chosen above all other fronts on which they fought to be the site of the Canadian Memorial, raised by a grateful homeland to commemorate much more than a single battle, however bloody and however triumphantly victorious the outcome.

Vimy was the Canadian sector of the Front in France. Time and again, and for months on end, Canadians had fought around Vimy. Wherever they were sent, from Passchendaele to Amiens, they always came back to the shadow of the Ridge.

HIGGINS, D.G.:
4 Div.Arty.

I reckon that in my three years of active service with the 9th Battery half my time was spent in and about the Vimy Ridge.

NARRATOR:

Their Ridge. What was it like?

KILPATRICK, Rev.G.:
42nd

Vimy Ridge itself is a long stretch that commands the Valley of Scarpe between Lens and Arras and at its highest point is about 475 feet above sea level. Since the Germans occupied the heights they had a perfect view of our trenches which made it impossible for any

(CONT)

KILPATRICK, Rev.G.:
(cont.)

daylight movement overland. Of course, as we lay at the foot of this slope our field glasses showed us everything that was ahead of us, and I knew long before I went over the ground every object there. This broken wheel and this gun carriage and so on, so that when the time came to go over we weren't stumbling into unknown territory.

MacTIER, W.S.M.:
13th

The Hun was above us and any streams ran into us and the trenches were full of water. Then it froze. Everything froze, and snow on the ground. Then the thaw came and everything just fell in.

BONNER, Arthur:
116th

The communication trench was above your knees in mud and, of course, great coats coming down halfway between your knees and your ankles gathered up mud and it would get on there two and three inches thick and it would be awful heavy, and we just took our jack-knives and hacked them off into shorter coats to keep them out of the mud. I well remember I was one of them and I was fined One Dollar for destroying Government property.

PEARSON, A.G.:
PPCLI

The line at Vimy Ridge consisted more or less of a section of mine craters where the line had been blown up and the Germans were on one side of the crater and we were on the other.

KILPATRICK, Rev. G.:
42nd

Well our outpost lines were all on the lips of these craters. You could hear the sentries talking in the German line. I remember one fellow telling me, "The fellow opposite me," he says, "has got a terrible cold." He said, "I'm making it worse because I've shot holes in his dipper so that he can't bail it and he is standing in water to his knees."

BARCLAY, R.G.:
PPCLI

The Vimy line had been very quiet until the Canadians got there and then as usual we immediately started stirring up trouble.

RUSSENHOLT, E.S.:
44th

The French had held these trenches and they were nice. And there were printed orders on little chunks of board on the support trenches. And these orders were that in the case of attack all the outposts were to withdraw and the support trench would be the line of defence. And the first day we were there these were all torn off and replaced with orders that in case of attack the line of defence were the outpost line.

BROWN, Bob.:
46th

Nearly every time we were in we made a little raid. And the Germans never raided us once. We believe they tried it one night. We saw a man stand up on the wire but nobody ever got in our trench.

PEARSON, A.G.:
PPCLI

There was a great deal of tunnelling going on, and a great deal of blasting. This meant that the man out on sentry-go didn't know whether the enemy were right under his feet blasting or whether it was our own blasting. It was a very very trying time for the men on sentry-go.

DEAN, N.G.:
R.C.R.

You'd be sitting there innocent as anything you know, in the trench, and all of a sudden that was it. The whole front, maybe a thousand yards of trench would go up, just blown sky-high, see.

PEARSON, A.G.:
PPCLI

You could hear the shrieks when the thing blew up and they were just buried in it. Then we consolidated the lip of the crater.

BROWN, Archie:
78th

They had tunnelled Vimy Ridge from one end to the other. And in these tunnels it was just like an underground city. Rooms were dug out, medical rooms, orderly rooms, and sleeping quarters. And the part of the 78th we were in was what was known as Blueball Tunnel. There was a little miniature railroad down there, a narrow gauge railroad, right from one end to the other, to carry supplies on. And every fifty to a hundred yards there would be a stairway up to the trench above, and this preparation had been going on all winter to get ready for this one final push.

NARRATOR:

Between 10th January and 22nd February the British Forces, especially the 5th Army, had sustained a heavy and increasing pressure on the German lines which kept falling back under the insupportable weight. On the night of February 22nd-23rd, for example, the enemy drew back another three miles on a fifteen mile front.

The German High Command now determined upon a massive withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line to be effected between 15th and 18th March. They left behind them utter devastation. All military installations and materiel were destroyed or removed. Villages were evacuated and razed to the ground. Livestock driven off or destroyed. Wells were filled in or polluted. The progress of the pursuing allies was inhibited by the felling of trees across highways, the mining of crossroads and the ingenious rigging of booby-traps.

Meanwhile the British First and Third Armies were completing their offensive about Arras and, in Haig's plan, would carry on to the First Battle of the Scarpe---an attack astride that River by the Third Army on an eight-mile front while, simultaneously, the Canadians would go against Vimy Ridge.

ROSS, Alex.:
28th

Vimy was a very important tactical feature, important from the point of view of defence and also very important to the Germans from the point of view of observation because we could do nothing in our area without being seen by daylight and, therefore, it was a place that had to be held. Consequently they had developed every known form of fortification -- good trenches, tunnels, caves and very heavy wire. The French had attacked it twice unsuccessfully and it was considered to be an extremely difficult operation. As a matter of fact, I was told at the time that the French said that the Canadians could never capture Vimy Ridge by the method adopted.

HANCOX, George:
PPCLI

A German Officer was captured on a raid and he said, "We know you're going to attack Vimy Ridge. We know all about your plans." He says, "You might get to the top of Vimy Ridge but," he said, "I'll tell you this, you'll be able to take all the Canadians back to Canada in a row-boat that get there." Fortunately for us he was wrong.

PEARKES, G.R.:
5 CMR

Vimy was planned months before and we spent the whole winter of '16-'17 in the Vimy area. We knew the territory. We could look up and see that low ridge all the time and we were taken out of the line and tapes were laid down representing the trenches and we were rehearsed over and over again for the taking of the Ridge.

BARBOUR, Royden:
25th

All the German trenches were laid out in tape, and we did our training over those tapes. They were mock-ups of the actual German trenches.

WILSON, W.S.:
38th

Every time the Battalion was out of the line and in support or reserve five or six miles behind the line we were practising on the tapes, and every battalion and every company and every platoon was allocated to a certain section of the German trench.

HOME, W.J.:
R.C.R.

It even got so that if every officer was knocked out the non-commissioned officers would know what to do. For instance, we'd go out today and we'd practise the attack and the Colonel would say, "Now so many officers have been knocked out," and you'd find perhaps a sergeant taking command of a company and it got so that every man knew exactly what he had to do.

ODLUM, V.W.:
11th Inf.Bgde.

Well, the answer of course: First, we had superb confidence in ourselves. No matter how bad it was we would correct that. Secondly, the Canadian Corps did not have to carry any of the load at all. It was out being, as we called it then, fattened up for the next operation, and we went down there and we gathered around the perimeter of that bulge. Had a chance to look at what was going on, to learn what we could, and what we saw, and this gave us a great deal of confidence.

NARRATOR:

The degree of movement and the tempo was increasing. The Motor Machine Guns, the Flying squads, the Cavalry were breaking out in all directions. As presaged in the battle of Cambrai, attritional trench warfare was coming to an end.

POPE, M.A.:
Engineers

About the 28th of March, a week after the big German attack we went out. I presume only two battalions that night, and we went to a place called Mont St. Eloi, not the old St. Eloi of the salient, another one, Mont St. Eloi behind Vimy. When I got up in the morning we seemed to be out in the fields, at least joined our Headquarters in the fields, and Odlum gave me verbal orders to proceed to a certain map location because we were to relieve one of the Brigades that had been attacked, the neighbours on the right. And I always remember the 75th Battalion. I think the whole battalion, lead by Al. Poupore, streaming across the fields as if he were on manoeuvres on the Prairies out at Calgary or Sarcee or something of that sort. It looked like open warfare. They were just going over the land, in dispersed order of course, and that relief was carried out.

NARRATOR:

In front of Amiens the situation had become desperate.

KING, E.A.:
R.C.D.

There is something here that I think the people of Canada ought to know, that the Germans had broken through and their spearhead was for Amiens and the orders the previous day were these. If the Germans take Amiens the British will retire to the Channel

(CONT)

NARRATOR:

The Wire. The foot-soldier's most implacable enemy. In their two years in France, how many Canadian soldiers had been mowed down by enemy machine guns when their forward progress had been halted against an impregnable barrier of uncut barbed wire.

This time the Corps would make sure that the wire had been cut. To do the job they looked to their artillery. It must be a job for the guns. The Tank had not yet been made that could climb the shell-pocked face of Vimy through the myriad shell-holes on that slope of liquid mud and slime. This time the guns were there.

JENKINS, W.L.:
2nd Siege Bty.

There was a mass of artillery coming in. I think it was said that if every gun behind Vimy Ridge was placed wheel to wheel there would be no space left. We were observing by balloon mostly, because it was considered the most accurate observation you could get, and we had our guns pretty well pinpointed for our targets a week before the battle started.

STEWART, J.S.:
Artillery

We used to fire nearly a hundred rounds a gun per day to cut the wire. We had that much ammunition.

NARRATOR:

The guns had been used this way on the Somme but not with complete success. This time the Corps would make doubly sure that the guns had done their job.

ROSS, Alex.:
28th

We had aerial observation and also patrols. Patrols would go out from time to time to report on how it was getting on and then, of course, it was our job at night to prevent them repairing the wire. The units holding the line had to see that any wiring party was discovered and fired upon and driven in. That was part of the front line duty.

ORMOND, D.M.:
10th

We did a raid on the morning of the 8th of April to examine the wire in front of us. The ground observation had said the wire was cut. The air reconnaissance reported the wire was heavy but they couldn't come down close enough to see because it was on the apex of the ridge, so Sir Arthur Currie personally came up and he suggested we should find out. So we put over the raid on the morning of the 8th and we reported it wasn't cut. The ground observers couldn't see it. The wire on either side of us had been cut but these craters threw up lips. They couldn't see the wire. And then the trench was cleared for a thousand yards on each side of our front and back for four hundred. Then Sir Arthur Currie turned the whole artillery onto it and cleaned it up, and when we went over on the morning of the 9th the wire was no obstacle, but that was Sir Arthur's own personal attention to that. We would have been ready to go over as it was.

WILLIS:

The infantry would move forward supported not only by their Artillery barrage but, as well, over their heads there would be a protective screen of steel from the heavy machine guns firing in a manner devised and planned by General Brutinel. French by birth and military education, Canadian by adoption, this great and imaginative innovator was about to revolutionize the use of the heavy machine guns.

Before the attack began they were already effectively harassing the enemy's supply lines, precisely in the manner of an artillery barrage.

RUSSENHOLT, E.S.:
44th

The lads in the tenth machine gun company told me that they were firing up to three hundred thousand rounds per night per gun, and that they were covering all road junctions and so on, and the prisoners who were taken said that they hadn't had food come up for a couple of days. And we always attributed that, of course, to the very effective coverage of artillery-machine gun fire on the reverse slope of the Ridge.

NARRATOR:

On Easter Sunday, the 8th of April, 1917, the troops behind the front lines moved up to their assembly areas. For the first time in the war, all four Canadian Divisions were about to move together in one massive joint attack. As Colonel Russenholt has told us, it was an entirely different Army from the one that had fought on the Somme. Tough, efficient, professional, somewhere on the long long trail the civilian soldiers of Sam Hughes's citizens army had lost their amateur standing.

CLYNE, H.R.H.:
29th

The 29th Battalion marched to its assembly area at twenty-one hundred hours on the night of the 8th of April so as to be in position with time for a good rest prior to the attack. All ranks appeared to be quietly confident as there was time to spare and they had been guided to their exact position in the darkness by scouts who knew exactly where to go and there was no confusion. It was very cold. Then the men did something perhaps they shouldn't do. They lit little fires. They had all these little wee fires but the wood was thick enough to shield us. And I saw that night Henry the Fifth at Agincourt wandering round from little fire to little fire, "And gentlemen of England now abed will curse the day they were not here". It was exactly that. That exact scene, with the camp fires all over, the same scene.

NARRATOR:

In the dark of night there was movement again in that World of Stealth. The first waves assembled in the jumping-off trenches on the exposed slopes of the ridge while the units which would eventually go through them, mustered in the echoing vaults and tunnels under the Ridge from which they would later debouch when the first wave had gone forward.

JACK, Alec. W.:
54th

As usual it was pitch dark, pouring rain, and the Germans were very nervous and were shelling very heavily as we went forward from the Music Hall line down across Zouave Valley and entered the tunnels under the Ridge. The Battalion going up to the attacking trenches went up in the normal way.

CROWE, R.:
72nd

We were all in these huge tunnels, you know, and we were sitting on the ground there, you know, with our backs up against the wall, and trying to make ourselves feel comfortable, or giving each other company I guess, mostly, and the Commanding Officer he came along and he looked at me and he says, "Drummer, come with me." And I followed him out into the trenches, and he visited every man that was out there in that front line. He went right down the line. And that was the last tour he made before the big scrap the next morning.

ROSS, Alex.:
28th

In our sector there were no tunnels. We were concentrated in old trenches, old dugouts, any shelter we could find. Just before dawn, before zero hour, I went out and the area was absolutely deserted.

GOODMURPHY, A.B.:
28th

We took our positions in this trench and then we waited. Everything was quiet. There wasn't a sound, you know. We all had our watches and we knew what time the bombardment was supposed to start but when we were two or three minutes from the time it seemed a long time before it did happen then even, you know.

MacGregor, F.:
25th

From one o'clock until five-thirty -- thousands of men -- quiet. The locking ring on a bayonet is a little loose. When the order to fix bayonets went along the line you'd think there was a thousand bees humming. The trembling waiting.

ROSS, Alex.:
28th

Then the barrage came down and the attack went on.

MacGregor, F.:
25th

During the night while we were waiting in the jumping-off place they took all our light artillery out of the gun pits and manhandled them right up behind us, and when they opened up it would split your ear-drums.

HANCOX, George:
PPCLI

You just couldn't hear a thing. You could just hear one continual roar of the guns. It was just a drum fire, just a steady roar.

RUSSENHOLT, E.S.:
44th

It was just like a continuous sheet of lightning, like a prairie fire behind us, and it was utterly dark still, pitch black. You could hear this tremendous swish of the shells overhead and then just a continuous crash along the line. This was the most spectacular fireworks I ever saw or hope to see.

SIVERTZ, Gus:
2 CMR

We were dancing a macabre dance as our nerves just vibrated to the thousands of shells and the millions of machine gun bullets that were whizzing over. And I felt that if I had put my finger up I should have touched a ceiling of sound because sound had acquired a new quality, the quality of solidity. It really was indescribable. It wiped out any fear that might have been lingering in us.

NARRATOR:

From precisely 5.30 to 5.33 on Easter Monday morning the guns roared, 983 of them firing three rounds per minute into the enemy's foremost trenches. Then the barrage lifted and moved on to pound the second line and the infantry were away.

MacGregor, F.:
25th

The nerve strain in an attack like Vimy ends when you're away.

COOPER, H.S.:
3rd

When we started over at 7.30 in the morning they still had a 5-9 barrage on our old front line and it looked as though our Battalion would have to go through it. It stopped just as we got there. That was counter battery work that did that, that stopped it and how! Well then from then on there was relatively little shelling. We just outgunned him so much that he didn't have a chance of coming back.

MacGREGOR, F.:
25th

They were piling the gunfire ahead of us, plowing up everything ahead of you. A rat couldn't live on that ridge.

HANCOX, George:
PPCLI

Previously we bombarded for weeks ahead and finally on the day of attack there would be a long bombardment of three or four hours. The Germans would immediately retire into their dugouts, wait till the bombardment lifted, then come out. Well in Vimy immediately the bombardment opened the troops followed on the heels of the barrage. The barrage lifted almost immediately and went on. The Germans were down in their dugouts. Of course they weren't expecting the assaulting troops for two or three hours yet. Well, the troops were right on top of them.

PINSON, Jack:
7th

That front line of his was just dancing with exploding shells when we were advancing there that morning, and we'd advance to within fifty yards of that and wait a few seconds till it would lift. It was timed. And they'd lift and fire on the next line and we'd advance again.

CAMPBELL, H.:
14th

We felt so safe in front of that rolling barrage. You could see the thing beating. It was just like a lawn mower you know, when you're cutting grass. They just simply gave us wonderful fire.

NARRATOR:

As the artillery raised their sights and lifted their fire forward, the machine gunners lifted their guns and followed forward too.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

Brutinel's idea was that these machine guns, they first gave this great supporting fire. That fire kept up, you see, way over our heads, which got us over there, and when you got to your objectives he had another wave of machine guns moving forward to take positions behind you, giving you continuous support all the way up, and particularly on the flanks.

BRUTINEL, Raymond:
M.G.

The machine gun detachments moved generally on the time scheduled for the infantry; in fact in some cases they were away ahead of the infantry.

RUSSENHOLT, E.S.:
44th

The machine gun fire was so thick and heavy and persistent that I saw balls of barbed wire rolled up there and beaten as hard as iron.

DORMAN, G.:
2 CMR

The whole thing was flattened. I looked back and it put me in mind of an anthill. As far as I could see it was just alive with glittering bayonets and, boy, did I have courage! I said, "Oh what support I've got. I'm alright." But before that I thought I was alone, I thought I was the only one in the world there but when that started, Boy! my chest stuck out!

SIVERTZ, Gus.:
2 CMR

The first thing that happened to me was I tripped over some wire at the same time that a 5.9 landed about three feet from me, and as I came up out of the shell hole I had a terrific blow on the top of my tin hat, drove it right down over my ears. A great big piece of chalk, as big as my own hand, had been blown up by the shell and it was coming down as I came up. So I ran and joined my little column of lumps because when you are in a situation like that when you're alone you feel that the whole German army is aiming at you, all its heavy artillery, all its machine guns, everything. And you want to go up and touch men. You want to say, "Here I am. Okay, here I am." After that we just swept up. There was nothing, nothing could stop the Canadians that day.

DORMAN, G.:
2 CMR

I could see this one going, that one going, and I'll never forget, there was a chap, his both legs shot off, and there he was on his stumps, and he was still using his gun to go forward. Oh, gee! It was terrible.

NARRATOR:

The men of the long line of twenty-one battalions in the first wave had to negotiate wellnigh impossible terrain; Pocked with shellholes and mine craters, laced with torn and tangled remnants of German wire, everywhere underfoot the slime and liquid mud, shell-churned and drenched with rain and snow.

PINSON, Jack:
7th

Just before we went over the top it started to rain and snow and by the time we got halfway over to where we were going we were up to our knees in mud. We lost about fifty percent of our men on Vimy Ridge but we lost the most of them in the first half mile.

ARMSTRONG, Vic.:
10th

We waited until we could see the barrage lift and then we went over and we were around some craters.

10th

That's when we lost all the men. We lost over a hundred killed going from our trench to the first line of the German trench - the machine guns.

FARMER, A.:
M.G. Corps

My brother whom I lost at Vimy was just a very few feet from me when I lost him, actually. He was wounded first and dropped into the shellhole to give him first-aid, and after giving him first-aid I left him. Of course I couldn't stay and apparently he raised up in the shellhole to watch me, see where I went, and I heard the shot fired and heard it land and turned around to see him fall. I got back to him a second time and he was gone, and of course I couldn't stay and I went forward with my troops. But there was always a doubt in my mind that in the heat of battle I may have been mistaken, that maybe he hadn't been killed and that probably at some future time he might show up. I always had that on my mind for a long long time.

NARRATOR:

Some were luckier. Half of them came through and brought with them the Canadian Soldier's genius for seeing the bright side of even the darkest hours of battle.

SECORD, Harry:
18th

I got my men out in a big shellhole out in No Man's Land and we were to look for a dugout with a flag or something over the entrance and I said, "I'll go out along here and I'll see if I can see any sign of it. You fellows stay here." So I walked along, foolishly, along the middle of No Man's Land and there were three or four shells dropped behind me and the boys thought I was smashed to pieces. The Corporal had seen this flag and he took the rest of the men to this dugout. I finally saw it and I got to the top of this dugout and I could hear the boys talking down below. "Poor old Secord, he got it." "Yes, and the son of a gun had the rum ration with him." So just then I appeared and I said, "All right, boys, I'm here with your rum ration" - Three cheers.

PINSON, Jack:

7th

All that ground was full of German dugouts, and we'd come to a dugout we'd just throw three or four Mills bombs down into them and carry on.

BAGSHAW, F.B.:

5th

I remember one fellow standing at the top throwing bombs down. He'd say, "Come out you sons of bitches," and every time a man would come out he'd demand his watch. He had about twenty watches.

ROBERTSON, R.S.:

16th

They had a marvellous system of deep dugouts and if all those men had been up above doing their duty there are few of us would be here today.

CAUNT, T.G.:

8th

Any Germans who had been up were dead. Nothing living could have survived on top. The artillery did everything it said it would do, and I could hardly put my hand on the ground without seeing where shrapnel had gone in.

DORMAN, G.:

2 CMR

The first dugout we got to was all partly blown in but you could crawl down there and I could hear them down there, you know, FFUT-PSSS! Down goes a bomb. No, nobody coming up there. So away we go to another one. Finally I come to one, and the guys were pretty near the top. I ended up with 35 prisoners, some in their stocking feet, some in underwear, some in low shoes and socks, and some in the high boots, there, others with only a coat, and the odd one had a blanket. They were just knocked out of bed.

PINSON, Jack:

7th

The 7th Battalion objective was this famous German trench called Augsburg Trench, and right in front of it was the Nine Elms, and when we got to this Augsburg Trench we pulled a hundred and fifty prisoners out of there. They came out with their hands up. Behind it was a dip and then you started to climb out at these Nine Elms and then you swung off to the left to the Village of Thélus. Further over, right on the edge of the Ridge, was the village of Farbus. Well when we got through to the Nine Elms the First Brigade went through us and they went right through to Farbus.

PARSONS, M.E.:
2 CMR

Once the show started every man was actually his own general. I tagged myself onto a well-known sergeant, Sergeant Swanby, and we sailed through, and halfway up the barrage stopped. Everybody was supposed to stop and wait till it started again but Sergeant Swanby and the rest of us were so enthused we kept right on going, and we were down in front of that ridge. And we engaged eight Jerries. They gave us a bad time and we gave them a bad time, but it ended up that Sergeant Swanby and I were the only two alive. And we could see the barrage coming. We could see the whizzbangs thick as hair on a dog, and a piece of shrapnel hit Sergeant Swanby in the shoulder, and I'm the only one that came out of there unscathed.

FINLEY, Eric B.:
~~42nd~~

We had gone about, oh, not more than a third of a mile and I was knocked unconscious through being struck in the backside by the flat piece of a shell. When I recovered consciousness I then caught up with the line again and came face to face with German resistance, hand-to-hand fighting. I fired the eight shots in my revolver point-blank, and they were hurling potato mashers at us. One hit my helmet and exploded on my back. And George Kilpatrick, who was our Padre, came out and said, "Well they've got you at last, Eric. Can you make home?" And I said, "Well I've got to try." And he said, "Well the fire is very very bad." And I found another chap who was wounded and was coming in too, and in another shellhole we had another small German who we picked up and brought in between the two of us and, on the way in to evidence the fire this boy was killed right under our noses, walking in between myself and this other chap. He was dead before he hit the ground.

NARRATOR:

As wave after wave swept, cheering, up the ridge in an overwhelming flow of battle -- other, slower waves were ebbing down... thousands of German prisoners of War and the Canadian wounded coming back.

SIVERTZ, Gus:
2 CMR

I had the feeling that I was taking great seven-foot steps and going over the ground without any effort at all because my left temple artery had been cut. And I was so light-headed that while I was stumbling over the muck I had the sensation of walking over the top of

(CONT)

SIVERTZ, Gus:(cont)

everything and I felt hilarious. I wanted to laugh and talk to the men who were coming up to reinforce and I asked one for a drink of rum and he looked at my wound. No, nothing doing. And I didn't know where I was. Our artillery and his had cut up the ground so that there was nothing left to identify. And I saw a piece of wood, white painted wood, sticking out of the mud and I took it out and wiped it on my pants and it said on it "Ross Street". That was the point from which we had started that morning before dawn. In a few minutes I was in the medical trench and I sat down. A medical sergeant came up every few minutes and he would pick someone out, and he picked me out. And I reached the door of the medical dugout and we were just stepping down when we heard this shell coming. It sounded like a freight train moving through the sky. And when it exploded we looked back and where I had been sitting with six other men there was nothing but tatters of uniforms and bits of men. So I went through the thing and back out and I was stumbling along, still happy, still completely punch drunk and I found a blind Japanese who was not a Second CMR, but he was a Canadian, and by that time I was getting very weak, so he was very strong, but he couldn't see. I hope he later recovered his sight. I think possibly it was temporary. And he gave me the support and I gave him the eyes till we got out to Mt. St. Eloi, and I just had no sensation in my knees. They had just turned to rubber and I just clattered down on the cobblestones, absolutely inert, like a fish suddenly flung out of a stream.

NARRATOR:

By 7.30 A.M., two hours after the assault began, the troops of the Third Division had reached the crest of the Ridge and had occupied the Western edge of the Bois de la Folie. To their right, the First and Second Divisions, moving up on the much wider southern slopes, had further to go but early in the afternoon they too were nearing their final objectives.

SCOTT, G.:
29th

I was sent up to go up to Hero Wood and see whether that area was occupied by us. And I got to where I thought it should be on the map and I couldn't see anything. It turned out afterwards there wasn't anything. With our bombardment even the stumps had gone. The nearest woods I could see was Farbus Woods. And at this stage it was very very quiet as frequently happened after an attack. I walked over the top into Farbus Woods then I realized as soon as I got there that I had the wrong Wood, also realized that Farbus Wood hadn't yet been taken but there was nobody there. There was a field gun emplacement with nobody in it and very very deep dugouts, so I went down in these dugouts, picked up the odd souvenir and I went along a certain distance and I found a tunnel that ran out into the base of the Ridge on the German side which the Germans evidently used to come in without any danger of being seen or hurt. So I went to the mouth of this tunnel and about perhaps two hundred yards away there was a German howitzer in full operation. So back in the tunnel where I was perfectly safe I fired some random shots in their general direction and immediately they all left the gun because they were just waiting for someone to give them a hint that it was time to go away, so away they went. Well then I thought by this time that I'd better go back and tell the powers-that-be what was going on, so I went back to where our foremost line was and where there was a signal section and they telephoned to go over, that Farbus Wood was unoccupied. Then I went back to Farbus Wood again and I was there when a company of the 29th came up and captured it.

FENNEL, L.R.:
27th

We didn't meet any opposition until we got right up to the brow of the Ridge. Then there was a couple of machine guns there that gave us a little trouble, but as soon as we got them eliminated why we got to the brow of the Ridge and we looked down and on that Plain towards Mericourt there was just thousands of these Germans hiking for cover.

NARRATOR:

Now Canadians stood upon the whole southern end of the Ridge. What were the thoughts of these men of the forward units as they looked eastward over the Douai Plain from the crest of Vimy that they, and their comrades, had faced-up-to for five wet wintry months.

CLYNE, H.R.H.:
29th

It was hard to realize that Vimy Ridge had been captured and on schedule. There were no cheers and no gleeful shouts. All ranks looked over the great expanse of new country silently.

PHILPOTT, Elmore:
Arty.

The Children of Israel looking at the Promised Land! As far as I could see, miles after miles after miles, here was this beaten Germany Army. For people like myself who had been fighting this enemy for so long and had hardly ever seen him, to see all of these thousands of people in confusion coming and going, that was one of the real thrills I got out of the War, that sight. I'd never forget it.

ODLUM, V.W.:
11th Inf.Bgde.

It was amazing to get up there and look down on the Douai Plain beyond. We had no idea what was there. The map showed you this and that, you know, but you never really got the picture until your eyes got on it. We were looking always up the hill at the Germans up there firing down on us. We were in mud and they were up on dry ground. It was a darn nasty winter we spent but then when we got up and went over the top and saw the Douai Plain beyond, oh, our hearts just bubbled with joy. It was a great spectacle. It was open level land, farmland, glorious land.

HANCOX, George:
PPCLI

The western slopes of the Ridge, which we were occupying before the assault, slopes gradually down towards the Arras-Bethune Road. The eastern slope of the Ridge which is facing towards the Germans is quite steep and you could see all these mining villages for miles back.

FENNEL, L.R.:
27th

There were guns out in the brick yards out on the Mericourt Plain there, and our fellows were doing the darndest to keep them from getting these, you see. And by golly they come up there with four horses. Galloped up there and hitched them onto these guns and hiked them out. By golly, I tell you the shells were flopping around them because they was trying to get them with the heavies, you see. The field guns weren't up so that they could fire.

NARRATOR: Forward Observing Officers from the Artillery had moved up with the Infantry to direct the fire of the long-range guns.

JENKINS, W.L.:
Corps Arty.

We stayed in the tunnel overnight and we went forward with the Infantry in the early morning attack, and we managed to get to La Folie Farm, which was the top of the Ridge, so we were able to direct the fire, and it was terrific the havoc that we made at that time.

NARRATOR: The smaller guns could not be moved up through the quagmire of Vimy's western slopes, but that eventuality had been anticipated. Canadian gunners had been trained to man the German guns.

NICKLE, W.N.:
21st

We took a tremendous number of prisoners and, not only that, but we took four guns, and we turned them around. I saw the guns turned and fired by the Canadian artillery. The piles of ammunition were there like cordwood and in no time flat they were using the German guns to fire on the Germans who were retiring on the Plains of Douai, and I saw our own guns coming up, and the limbers got stuck in the mud so they had to take the ammunition up saddle-wise on horses and mules. You just couldn't get wheels through. It was just a quagmire.

HIGGINS, D.C.:
Arty.

The Third Brigade of artillery had specially allocated one Battery Commander to this job and he had a large working party. The Battery Commander was Major Crerar, the same gentleman who commanded the Canadian Armies in the Second War. They worked at nights and pushed forward what was called the Plank Road and it succeeded up to a point but from the time you got past the German front line you were still bogged down because it was a long way from there to the crest of the ridge so that, in fact, the whole attack, artillery-wise, couldn't have gone beyond the ridge that day.

LEACH, R.J.:
Corps Arty.

As far as the 60-pounder is concerned, on the afternoon of the first day I tried for six hours with eight heavy draught horses and a hundred men and I got one gun moved about a quarter of a mile.

NARRATOR:

Despite the glorious triumph on the right, the long day was not yet over nor the victory complete. Sir Julian Byng, the Corps Commander, had planned to defer the attack on "The Pimple", a tor at the northern end of the ridge, until the 10th of April, but he had not bargained on the Fourth Division's ordeal in clawing its way up another formidable height of land, Hill One Forty-five.

ODLUM, V.W.:
11 Inf.Bgde.

Hill One Forty-five stood up in the middle of the Vimy Ridge area and my Brigade had that hill-top to take. On both sides the ground was lower and the operation extended over a very considerable frontage, an operation that called for a tremendous effort because we were attacking up a hill, firing up a hill, and going up a hill is not an easy task.

JACK, Alec W.:
54th

The attack went off about dawn. It was snowing at the time, the Ridge was in an appalling mess, shellhole to shellhole practically the whole way across, interspersed with mine craters, barbed wire. All the shellholes were full of water and it would have been very difficult just taking a walk across there in normal attire without the loads that we carried, and under the conditions we went.

BAKER, Stanley:
54th

As soon as the 54th had passed the second trench we started over with this big spool of wire. It took eight men to carry it. We got halfway between the first and second line and two or three machine guns opened up on us. We found out eventually that there was about forty Germans that had been overlooked in the dugouts. There was about forty that came up after all the fighting

(CONT)

BAKER, Stanley: (cont)

force had gone over. They pinned us down and there was firing from both sides behind us. We got back by taking a tin hat, you see, and dredging a little passageway between one shellhole and another. And eventually we got back.

JACK, Alec. W.:

54th

Some hours after the action started reports were coming in as they normally would, but they were all at odds. Reports from our right flank were to the effect that we had got part way across the Ridge and then gone through the 102nd Battalion and were held up by a machine gun sniper fire considerable distance across the Ridge. Reports from our left flank, on the other hand, were stating that they were pinned down a very few yards out from their starting point by German machine guns which apparently had been missed by our barrage. But that was not realized or not known by the Commanding Officer and he was very confused with these conflicting reports. He detailed me to go up to the front, see what the situation was, carry out any reorganization of the Battalion which seemed to be necessary, then get them somehow over to their objective which was some five or six hundred yards further on. And I finally came to the left flank where I found that the 54th and the 102nd, or the remnants of them, were all together. There were about ninety men of the 54th, and there were a few more of the 102nd. 102nd Officers were all casualties and so were the 54th Officers. So, as a young fellow of twenty-five, I found myself in command of the remains of two battalions with our left flank up in the air and the Germans all around us at the back. I sent in a report on the situation and then I sorted out the men, getting the 54th to the exposed flank and the 102nd on our right.

NARRATOR:

Fired down upon from the yet uncaptured Pimple, and fired on from the rear by Germans who had come up from their deep dugouts after the first wave had passed, the 11th and 12th Brigades clung grimly to their gains and tried to link up their positions.

SCOTT, S.:
78th

I must confess that the situation the first day was so terribly confused, not knowing where anyone was, not knowing even whether we had overshoot our objective but suspecting we had, because we were getting some of our own stuff, and there seemed to be no way of telling the artillery to lift a little bit or to lay off of us. There was no means of communicating back from where we had come to find out where a Company Commander or another Platoon Commander might be. So for the first day we just sat it out in a shellhole, a big shellhole, and took a fair amount of punishment. Gathering in those of our wounded that we could get, we brought them into the shellhole and bound them up as best we could.

JACK, Alex. W.:
54th

We had a series of bombardments during the day, that is we suffered them. Then night came on and the 85th Nova Scotia Highlanders were sent up under cover of darkness and they came through and drove the German snipers out and filled in the gap on our left flank and the line became continuous from then on.

NARRATOR:

The 85th was one of two new battalions just formed to bring the Fourth Division up to strength. They had not yet had their baptism of fire, a formality that would very shortly (and very roughly) be attended to.

CROWELL, H.E.:
85th

We were a working party when the Vimy Ridge show was called. While they were fighting and going ahead we were to dig a communication trench right from one side of the ridge to the other. We had waited from dawn till eleven o'clock, say, in the morning, and the Colonel sent word that Captain Anderson of the Cape Breton Company and myself, as the Acting Commander of the Halifax Company, were to go up into the Tottenham Tunnel to the Headquarters of General Odium of the 11th Brigade and get some instructions from him. When we got there General Odium's report was that since early morning he had sent five Battalions up on his front. He hadn't had a word back from any source. He had sent out thirty scouts and none of them had got back to him with any message all morning so he figured that there must be strong points and machine gun emplacements and that, whenever anybody showed up above that

(CONT)

CROWELL, H.E.:(cont)

they were being picked off. So the result was that an arrangement was made that our two companies of the 85th that were within two hundred yards of him in the Music Hall Line where we'd been all night, would make an attack on the second German line at five o'clock that afternoon. Now we found that on our front we had three or four machine gun emplacements. They were down deep, forty or fifty feet down in dugouts. When the bombardment came on they went down and when it was over they came up. We kept on going and we were right over, right within less than a hundred yards of their machine guns, when the sun broke through, and I still say that the sun in the eyes of these German machine gunners saved our hides that afternoon for the few minutes that it took. We had previously been trained in our sections to carry rifle bombs and you had a man who carried the bombs and a man who held the rifle in position and you dropped the thing in and off she went, and this one Corporal, he started these on his own as he was going along through the mud, and one of these landed right near a machine gun in front of us. Then all the other sections, they all started doing the same thing and that's what put us right up on them. I don't think I was twenty yards away from one of these guns and the gunners were starting to race back to go down over the hill. They had to climb up out of their slippery trenches and I can see three Germans now. The top man started to slide and he slid down and he whacked into the face of the man behind him and the three of them came right downhill, right there at our feet, and I couldn't stop my boys from going beyond the objective. We were then on our objective so we had to go and pull them back and we were there all evening.

NARRATOR:

With their new positions somewhat more secure the two Brigades spent the night fighting off a threatened enemy counter-attack and further consolidating their position.

SCOTT, S.:
78th

Where my Sergeany was I couldn't tell you. Where my Company Commander was, I don't know and he certainly didn't know where I was. Now what do you do? It's dark. You can move - but where? So we just moved back a little bit and by gosh we found some more of our troops, if you please. Well that was kind of cosy.

(CONT)

SCOTT, S.:(cont)

Well then we sent out reliable N.C.O.'s and myself to hook up with our flanks if we could, and we did. We found remnants, you know, little pockets here and there.

NARRATOR:

Brigadier General Odlum, commanding the 11th Brigade, was not the soldier to sit back and accept the situation passively. If his men could not, for any reason, contact him -- he would, by some means, contact them.

ODLUM, V.W.:
11th Inf.Bgde.

In the end, towards the middle of the night or towards morning, I went forward myself to see what the position was. I had two or three officers with me and as I got up on the top of the hill I could see that we had not got over. We were bent back on the top. There were Germans still up there and I went around and I started on the left flank of my Brigade and, unit by unit, I'd take them forward and place them in position, one after the other, and I went along the line and took the last one up and right over the crest of the hill.

NARRATOR:

The ultimate attack on "The Pimple" scheduled for April 10th and now deferred to the 12th, would wait until the fresh 10th Brigade was brought up to assist the 11th and 12th in their assault on Hill One Forty-five.

MARSHALL, D.M.:
44th

The most beautiful barrage opened up and we looked out to our left and we saw the 50th Battalion going over the top and it was the most beautiful sight, and it wasn't half an hour after that that my Company Commander came running along and said, "Look, we've got to go over the top of this hill." I said, "When do we go?" He said, "Right now." Well - right now - and here are the fellows all sitting along the trench, and their rifles leaning against the parapet. Anyhow we went. We bounced over from shellhole to shellhole, in and out, and up and down, and finally we got over

(CONT)

MARSHALL, D.M.:(cont) to the bottom of the Ridge without any opposition, but we did run into a bunch of dugouts dug into the side of the hill and there were all these Germans. They thought the battle was over apparently because they were just sitting around in these shelters in the entrances to their dugouts and so I bang a couple of pistol shots and, of course, that wakened them up and they all came out with their hands up and they were quite willing to quit. But that wasn't the finish of the day. We got settled there and we were wandering up and down and pretty soon the Germans that had gone over onto the flat started to shoot at us, and they were getting a few of us because we didn't have much shelter there at all. We were on the downside of the hill. There was no shelter on this path. Anyhow we did stick it there and that night we were relieved and we moved off towards the bottom of the Pimple for the next show.

NARRATOR: After one day's rest and recuperation, the Fourth launched its attack against the lonely "Pimple".

RUSSENHOLT, E.S.:
44th

The Pimple was just a little raise of ground on the very left of our positions on the Ridge, and this is the raise of ground on which the Canadian Cross of Sacrifice is raised at the very north end of Vimy Ridge.

BROWN, Bob.:
46th

That Pimple was the highest point on the Ridge and the last part to be taken.

HART, Allen W.:
44th

Very early in the morning on the 12th we went up to the front line, and the zero hour came and over we went, you see.

GALBRAITH, A.A.:
44th

My instructions were that I was to go a hundred yards. Well you couldn't tell whether you had gone a hundred yards or not.

MARSHALL, D.M.:
44th

It started to snow like the dickens, just a regular blizzard. I went about maybe one hundred yards past our objective because you couldn't recognize anything. The mud was so bad that you couldn't stand still in any place. You'd have to move or you'd sink.

McDONALD, C.K.:
50th

It was snowing to beat the band and it was blowing right in their faces, and they said that the reason the attack was so successful was that the gunners in the German artillery couldn't see the SOS. We had very few casualties that morning.

HEWITT, T.H.:
46th

With the gale behind them and the snow, there seemed to be not much trouble. It went right into their eyes, you see, so the attack was going strong and we were fortunate enough to get in on this storm. It kind of covered our movements.

McDONALD, C.K.:
50th

I don't think the Germans expected the attack because they'd just brought in a bunch of fresh troops, you know, and they were all shined up and shaved and everything and they got these troops as they came up.

GOODALL, Tom.:
44th

We took the Ridge that morning, went over the top, and we had good success. We got over the Ridge and took our objective.

HART, Allen:
44th

We were very much annoyed that we couldn't go further, that arrangements hadn't been made for moving up the artillery and so on, because we felt that we had them on the run, that we could've moved a lot farther than we did and we weren't in a particularly good position. That was the wrong side of the slope to be when it comes to facing an enemy.

NARRATOR:

Whether or not the slopes of Vimy Ridge were the best tactical position from which to fight the enemy, the Canadians paused to enjoy the novelty of finding themselves above their foes... to be upon the heights and looking down. They were not to linger long atop their vantage point.

PHILPOTT, Elmore:
Artillery

The Germans fooled them a few days later by deciding that there was no use of them trying to hang on to the bottom of the hill and they pulled away back across the plain and then we were left in the position of having to chase them across out onto the flat plain which was a much less advantageous position. I happened to be there the day that the Germans pulled back and I was trying to convince my own Colonel that the Germans had pulled back and he wouldn't believe me, so I went down into the village of Vimy and came back and told him I'd been down myself and so I know they've gone. Then they did believe.

NARRATOR:

And now it was over. The shining page of Canada's war record had been written.

In six days of the fiercest fighting the Canadians had advanced some 4,500 yards; had seized 54 guns, 104 trench-mortars and 124 machine guns; had inflicted heavy losses on the enemy and captured more than 4,000 prisoners. Victory had been dearly bought. Canadian casualties numbered 10,602. 3,598 of them lay dead.

Here a grateful Government of the French Republic ceded to Canada, in perpetuity, 250 acres of shell-pocked, blood-soaked earth to be the site of a memorial to all the dead of Canada who gave their lives in The Great War. Now, 200 feet above the Plain of Douai the twin pylons of the white monument reach skyward from the Ridge's highest point, Hill One Forty-Five.

It was their Ridge. Because of them it is now, forever, ours.

RUSSENHOLT, E.S.:
44th

I think Vimy was the high day for the Canadian Corps. This was the first great victory.

McKENDRICK, H.C.:
4 CMR

When four Canadian Divisions representing people from every hamlet in Canada, from Atlantic to Pacific and well north, did one attack and took Vimy Ridge -- Well, it was the greatest achievement of Canada as a Nation in that war. It was a great achievement at any time.

PHILPOTT, Elmore:
Artillery

I saw the Canadians myself, being tempered into a great nation. One of the most amazing things about the War. The Canadians started out at the first of the War by no means confident of themselves. In fact they used to poke fun at themselves. "We are Sam Hughes's Army, with twenty thousand men. We cannot fight, we cannot march, what bloody use are we? But when we get to Berlin the Kaiser he will say, Hoch, Hoch, Mein Gott, what a blinking fine lot, the Canadian Infantry." But our hodge-podge, rag-tag and bob-tail of the First Division who just knew that they were tough guys, by accident you might say, when that great test came in the second battle of Ypres, discovered that they were as good as any troops anywhere. Long before Vimy, but certainly at Vimy, we had convinced ourselves that we were the finest troops on the western front. Not in a vain glorious way, I don't think, but they really had that confidence, and I don't think they ever lost it from then to the end of the war.

ADAMS, Tommy G.:
85th

From Vimy on we were invincible. Nothing could stop us.

WRIGHT, A.E.:
4th

I was wounded and went back, and there was a great crowd of people when the ship came in. All of a sudden somebody says this, "The Canadians. They've taken Vimy. Nobody did it before." And what a cheer went up. They threw chocolate bars. They threw flowers. In fact, I broke down and cried. We achieved something that nobody had done before. I think myself that was where Canada was born.

RUSSENHOLT, E.S.:
44th

I have always felt that Canadian nationality was born on the top of Vimy Ridge. I believe that hundred-thousand men who went over there and took that Ridge when we knew it'd been tried before and hadn't been successful, I don't think there was anything could have stopped that hundred-thousand men. And we were proud of the fact. There was a feeling that we had mastered this job and that we were the finest troops on earth. This is where Canadian nationality first came together when all of us were fused or welded, if you like, into a unity. And in these days when we hear so much about division and all this sort of thing to me, this just isn't possible.

NARRATOR:

Next week, the Victorious Canadians move down from the heights of Vimy Ridge into that incredible bog of mud and blood at Passchendaele.

Next week, Chapter 10 of "FLANDERS' FIELDS",
"THE BATTLE OF PASSCHENDAELE.

ANNOUNCER:

The first-person accounts of WORLD WAR I were researched, arranged and edited under the direction of Frank Lalor.

The series, originated by A. E. Powley, is written, narrated and produced by J. Frank Willis.

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen: "FLANDERS' FIELDS", Chapter 10, "THE BATTLE OF PASSCHENDAELE".

NARRATOR: Canadian hopes were never higher than after the capture of Vimy Ridge, but 1917 was not to be the year of victory. Throughout the summer the Corps was engaged in a series of small but expensive operations in the broken coal mining country in front of the German-held city of Lens, tidying up the line and diverting enemy forces from Haig's northern offensive in the dreaded Ypres Salient.

After an initial success at Messines in June, that offensive had been beset by delays which had enabled the Germans to recover their confidence and reinforce their positions. The rains of August and September had completed the disaster and at the beginning of October objectives which Haig had hoped to take on the 31st of July were still in enemy hands. He now looked to the Canadians to bring the campaign to a close.

On the 6th of June Sir Julian Byng had been given the command of the 3rd British Army, and his role as Commander-in-Chief of the Canadian Corps had been filled by Sir Arthur Currie, a native born Canadian. The burden of final responsibility is always heavy and on the 13th of October in the first months of his command Currie was faced with one of his most fateful and tragic decisions. He was asked to submit a plan for

(CONT)

NARRATOR:(CONT)

the capture of Passchendaele Ridge, the most important objective still in enemy hands.

ODLUM, V.W.:
11th Inf.Bgde.

General Lipsett and myself were sent up there to make a reconnaissance and report. All you could see was shellholes with a group of men in them, and you could look perhaps two hundred yards over and see the Germans in the same position. Both sides were just finished. They were down in the mud and there they were staying and they weren't even fighting. We went back, having seen this, and we met General Currie and gave him our report. We said, "It is bad. It is not an operation that should be carried on unless there is a major reason for doing it." General Currie then told us the situation. The French had broken down south and the only military answer was to save the French by pulling the load off them and, at the same time, to pull it far enough away so that the German troops would have to be moved and not just turned a little bit.

NARRATOR:

Unlike the British and Canadian Forces which had not reached their full strength until 1916, the French had been engaged from the beginning with the full weight of their manpower. Their losses had been correspondingly heavy. The arrival of massive British forces by the Spring of 1916 had eased the situation but the epic French defence of Verdun had cost hundreds of thousands of lives. In 1917 exhausted French armies began at last to rebel against a General Staff religiously committed to the principle of "l'ATTACHE, TOUJOURS l'attaque." - no matter what the cost.

When Passchendaele was over the British forces in France would be not much better off. Any hopes of

(CONT)

NARRATOR:(CONT)

achieving the major objectives had long ago been abandoned, yet as Summer wore into Autumn there was a dismal prospect that even the minor objectives were not going to be achieved. The British armies too were exhausted. They could not advance further. Nor could they winter in that bog. Unless Passchendaele Ridge was taken they were going to have to withdraw to a better defensive position.

Withdraw after all that loss? Sacrifice ground they had taken with so much agony and blood? It was an unthinkable proposition.

COSGRAVE, L.V.M.:
C.F.A.

Things were looking pretty bad, and that ridge had to be taken, just had to be taken, and I've always had a terrific admiration for Currie. When he was called down by Field Marshal Haig to be given instructions that the Canadians are to take Passchendaele Currie said, "We can take it, but not in one attack, and only on condition that we have ample artillery reserves. We've got to have that."

NARRATOR:

Lt.Col. Andrew McNaughton went to the salient with General Morrison, the Commander of the Canadian Artillery to examine the situation.

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:
Corps Arty.

After I looked over the Corps Artillery I reported that, if I were the German counter-battery officer and I had one brigade, I would see to it that they didn't fire a round. They were all strung out in one line, batteries mixed up, morale gone. The Brigade Staffs were living far behind and Morrison reported to the Corps Commander that there had to be a preparation and we had to get our legs under us again, some way or another, and we had to have some more artillery,

(CONT)

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.
(cont)

and we had to get rid of a lot of the units that were played out. They had to be withdrawn from the line and other replacements brought in and the whole thing reorganized in some sort of fashion. Well Currie made that a condition that we should have a period to reorganize, which he did, and it made an awful lot of difference too.

ORMOND, D.M.:
10th

There were supposed to be three hundred-odd guns in action on the front that he was to operate over and General Morrison reported that not more than a half of the guns were in action. General Currie reported it to Haig and Haig doubted his word, so Currie then himself, in person, went up and checked every gun on the front and then went back to Haig and told him what the situation was; so that the start of the Canadian operation was put back a week to get this matter straightened out.

HIGGINS D.C.:
Artillery

I wasn't concerned with the Higher Command's strategy and knew very little about it. We just did what we had to do and lived by the day, and from one leave to the next, but there was considerable talk about Passchendaele because it was going back to the Salient and those of us that had been there knew it was a pretty tight squeeze.

ROSS, Alex.:
2nd Div.

It's the one job that we went into with no real heart. I had never seen my men so depressed as we were when we moved into the Salient. They knew what the Salient was like, always had been like. It was the graveyard of everybody.

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:
Corps Arty.

It was only discipline and a direct order that took us into Passchendaele. Nobody wanted to go there. It isn't that we didn't want to fight, but when you fight you like to fight under reasonable conditions, particularly when you've got a good mechanism in which you've got confidence. You don't want to be paralyzed by mud and terrain difficulties.

KILPATRICK, G.C.D.:
42nd

It was the wettest summer in thirty years. It rained incessantly all August, September and October, and when the Canadian Corps arrived at Passchendaele, it faced an indescribable quagmire, ghosts of shattered trees and the rest nothing but shellholes almost touching one another and all filled to the lip with water.

JACK, Alec. W.:
54th

The valleys which we had to traverse had been drained in the old days and the shell fire had busted all this drainage system to pieces, and the result was the whole countryside was a morass absolutely.

MacKENZIE, John:
72nd

They handed us out long underwear and we were wearing the kilt, so we put our long underwear on and instead of our knees showing our underwear was showing. However, with the cold that was there and the wet, we just didn't care, and there was nobody looking at us.

NARRATOR:

The 3rd and 4th Divisions were the first to arrive in the salient. On the 18th of October they began their march through Ypres to relieve the Australians and New Zealanders of the 2nd Anzac Corps.

TURNER, A.:
50th

Just before you got to Ypres we were told to get out of the trucks and Tommy Tweed, our Lieutenant, he told us to lie low and not move around until it got dark. We did that and then when it got dark we were loaded down like pack mules and started this trip up.

SCOTT, Stewart:
78th

Through the dead city of Ypres in the dark of night with the flares from the forward areas forming this backdrop, so you got a shimmering outline of this Cloth Hall for instance, and these partially destroyed buildings with scampering troops. You hurried through because the exit was a place called Hell Fire Corner, and it was well named, and that led out onto the Menin Road through the Menin Gate. The accuracy of the shelling was appalling, and it was much worse of course when you got on the road to Menin. It was just Dante's Inferno with dead carcasses, and dead men, men who had just died ten minutes before, and who was going to stop to clear the dead when you might be joining them yourself if you didn't just keep on going. You scampered along trying to keep the fellow in front of you in view, because he might take a right wheel or a left wheel and if you missed him God knows where you'd land up. And then, having gone up the Menin Road for goodness knows how far, we turned left. The guide said "We turn here. Come this way, sir." So we'd turn left

(CONT)

SCOTT, Stewart:(cont) and we get on to about a fifth-class road that was slippery as the devil and probably an inch or two of slime over the top of it, and you went along there I don't know how far until you turned right again, and this time you travelled on these duckboards. They were just laid on the ground and of course there were many intervals where the duckboards had ceased to be because a shell had got them, so you would step off in the mud to reach the next duckboard and you might go to your ankles, you might go to your shins, and if you weren't careful and you were weary and careless you could step off into three or four feet of water.

ALBON, C.J.:
25th

And if you fell off the duckboards you had it. You couldn't even stop to pick a fellow up. You couldn't see him in the first place, and you couldn't reach him in the second place, and there was somebody pushing you in the third place.

SCOTT, Stewart:
78th

You eventually got to the line and your guide said, "This is it." "This is our trench?" "Yes, this is your trench." "Well, where is the trench?" "Well, you are looking at it." Just kind of a ditch.

SHIELDS, T.T.:
PPCLI

When you came out in the morning into the daylight at stand-to, this was when you got your first impression of this tremendous area of devastation, mud, mud, mud, mud. Nothing but mud.

SCOTT, Stewart:
78th

The land had no features, no woods, no buildings, just tormented soil.

KILPATRICK, G.C.D.:
42nd

Because of the mud there were no trenches, just shell-holes. That forward line was made of shellholes. The men were wet to the skin day after day. Their overcoats were plastered with mud. The Quartermaster weighed one of these overcoats when the fellows came out and the overcoat alone weighed fifty pounds. So you can imagine how hard it was to move at all with that weight and the depth of the mud.

SHIELDS, T.T.:
PPCLI

Your clothes were wet all the time but there was nothing to be done about it. It was part of the job and it had to be done and it was done. Every morning you got your rum just before stand-to. They'd give you a good slug of rum and that would warm you up but half an hour after you had it the effects were gone because you were wet practically through.

(CONT)

SHIELDS, T.T.:(cont) Food was a problem. It was brought up as far as it could be by mules, and when they couldn't go any further it was manhandled up into the forward areas where the troops were. You had no hot food up there unless you had a little lamp wick or something in your pocket that you could start a little fire with.

SHEPPARD, H.L.:
Artillery

We had empty gasoline tins to get water, and we had to go away back about three or four miles and then when we did get it it was all full of gasoline. You could boil it, you could do whatever you liked, you never got rid of that gasoline. All you had was gasoline and indigestion. It was an awful hole.

NARRATOR:

Across this infernal, blood-drenched quagmire communications were almost impossible. One of the sagas of Passchendaele was the building of pathways and roads.

SHIELDS, T.T.:
PPCLI

There were two ways they built roads. The one was they put planks down. They put the planks crossways and they made a firm road. The engineers did that. After you got off that they would bundle faggots together, that is small branches off trees, tie them into bundles and throw them into the shellholes to fill them up to give you footing to get across. Now you can imagine travelling in the dark over that kind of terrain. You slugged along in the mud with mud halfway up to your knees, and the first thing you went off a bundle of faggots and down into one of these holes, and it's a wonder that the going was negotiated at all.

BOTTRILL, W.E.:
4th

Do you know I've got a photographic impression of a shell falling into that road and the cross section of the hole being blown. You've got mud on the top and then immediately under the mud you've got cobblestones, a layer of dark cinders and then the brown earth. And it was only momentarily you had that view because almost immediately the liquid mud started to run into that hole and once it was filled up with that the guy that was coming up the road who stepped into it was up to his neck, and that was the sort of thing that we were contending with.

NARRATOR:

If the Infantry had much to contend with, the state of the Artillery, for once at least, could be said to be even worse. Here nobody could accuse the gunners of living a life of ease in their cosy gun positions well behind the lines. To begin with, it was almost impossible to find a gun position.

CLARK, Gregory:

4 CMR

We made gun positions at Passchendaele out of crates of bully beef. We, the infantry, assisted the engineers and the artillery in transporting tons of bully beef and pouring it into the mud until at last it had sunk deep enough to give a solid foundation for an eighteen-pounder gun.

BURCHARD, Harry K.:

Artillery

It was a man killer. You'd laid wooden plank platforms under them but it was impossible to build a firm foundation in that muck, so you fired your gun and she recoil and jump about four inches to one side, and you'd fire another one, and by the time you fired half a dozen she would be practically off the platform. So there was nothing to do but haul it forward in the mud and bolster up your platform on that side and put her back on again, and half a dozen more shots she'd be off the other side.

McKAY, J. Keiller:

Artillery

All the ammunition had to come up on pack mules and if a mule got off the little beaten track he probably had to be shot because you could never get him out.

SHIELDS, T.T.:

PPCLI

The mules were up to their bellies in mud, loaded down with three shells on each side. They couldn't get out. The drivers couldn't get them out. They couldn't get them another step, and the mules bray there in the dark you know, helpless. I have actually seen artillery drivers standing there crying, crying in their helplessness.

YOUNGMAN, Ed.:
19th

A mule that belonged to the 18th Battalion lurched off the fascines into a shellhole and the poor thing kept sinking down and down, inch by inch, and we were frantic and finally the transport officer of the 18th Battalion decided there was only one thing to do, and when his head was just above the mud the officer pulled his revolver out of his holster, and I will never forget the look on that poor brute's great brown eyes when he looked at the officer and the officer shot him and then cried like a kid.

NARRATOR:

Some batteries found an easier solution to the problem of ammunition supply.

LEACH, R. J.:
Artillery

I got into trouble one day. Somebody looked at my ammunition return and found that I'd shown no high explosive shell for two days, but I'd fired about eight hundred. Well, I'd dug them out of the mud.

NARRATOR:

Dug them out of the mud? During his preliminary reconnaissance, before the Canadians arrived, General McNaughton had gleaned certain information that sheds some light on this question.

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:
Corps Arty.

Orders were being given to fire ammunition that was never in fact being fired. If they came under bombardment the Chinese Labor Battalions would dump the ammunition off and it would be reported in returns as expended when it actually would be thrown in the mud.

CARROLL, Wallace:
15th

I got detailed to an artillery unit and our job was to wipe the mud off the shells and stack them up alongside of the gun. And, boy, they put those shells over there one after the other just as fast as they could put them over.

STEWART, J.S.:
Artillery

We were after them harassing them all the time and they just turned around and harassed us. I was up to see our guns and, during that hour, they counter-battered the position of every gun in the Canadian Corps and I saw fellows driven off the 9.2. They had no cover and the lieutenant or whoever was in charge drew them away while that barrage was on. It was one artilleryman fighting another.

HIGGINS, D.C.:
Artillery

The gun positions were either on the road itself or just off it. There was no choice, and the German knew this because he'd just left the area and he simply shelled the roads with the result that he got everything and everybody.

NARRATOR:

Once again the Germans were on the high ground with a commanding view of the amphibious creatures in the swamp below, frogs that had once been human. The Germans were not floundering in the stinking mud of unprotected shellholes open to the skies.

McKNIGHT, Graham:
26th

They had these cement pill boxes all along the line, and if you ever got in front of that fire there was no chance for you whatever, you see.

CLARK, Gregory:
4 CMR

They were a sort of concrete iceberg with nine-tenths of it below the ground and one-tenth, the deadly one-tenth, sticking above with the slots for the machine guns to fire out of. Impossible things!

HANCOX, George T.:
PPCLI

They might get quite a bit of shock if a shell landed right on it but usually there would be one or two men left that could man a machine gun and the havoc they could make among the poor devils that were trying to advance through the mud towards them that could only crawl forward.

NARRATOR:

General Currie had planned his campaign with careful attention to the possibilities. It would be carried out in three stages with an interval between each to bring up fresh forces and organize supply.

At 5.40 A.M. on the 26th of October, the first attack began. On the left of the Corps front the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles were soon halted by the fire of German Machine guns from their cement redoubts, but not for long. The machine guns were overcome by the bravery and dash of Tommy Holmes, V.C., one of three Canadians who would this day win the Victoria Cross.

CLARK, Gregory:
4 CMR

Tommy Holmes was under age when he joined the battalio but nobody knew it. And when he joined the 4 CMR young Tommy, aged 17, starts up the line. A shell fragment gets him and back he goes to England without ever having seen the front line. Well naturally in England when he got out of hospital and went back to the reserve battalions he had his wound stripe up. Tha made him a veteran, you see, and he was immediately accepted into the company of the other veterans in the reserve battalions who were men apart. They were the wise guys. He didn't stress the point that he'd never seen the front line. In fact he didn't tell anybody. The first time Tommy Holmes, V.C., was in the front line was in the Battle of Passchendaele, the most dreadful, desperate enterprise. We got going and we were hung up by pill boxes. The boys said, "We can't go in. They have got us." We were enfiladed. There was crossfire. There was nothing you could do, so Tommy noticed that the two facing him would center on anybody who showed any signs of coming to life and going forward on them. Tommy noticed there was two or three curious people sticking their heads up so he waited until both machine guns had suddenly switched and concentrated on that point where there was somebody sticking his head up, and Tommy took a wild leap forward into a shellhole. Well one of the guns saw this and turned on him but he lay doggo until he figured they weren't shooting at him, and so he took

(CONT)

CLARK, Gregory:(cont) another jump into another shellhole. Well heads started picking up all over saying, "What's going on?" you see, and the minute heads would come up the guns would immediately traverse and Tommy would make another jump, and the word spread like lightning on both flanks you see, everybody saying "Some crazy guy! Look! Look at him!" you see, "God!" And soon as their heads come up the guns would fire on them and then Tommy would take another wild jump, you see, and by this process, with the whole regiment getting more and more excited because there had been an hour of absolute stalemate, this kid, doing this wild leap from hole to hole, got within flinging distance of one of the pill-boxes, made the final jump, lobbed his two bombs into the little trench that was set for the machine gun, got the crew, by which time the whole regiment was streaming forward; and he said afterwards you know when we talked to him about it, "What in the dickens-- do you know what you have done?" "Well," he says, "no. I thought everybody did that sort of thing." That's what he got his V.C. for.

NARRATOR:

On General Lipsett's right, the 43rd and 58th Battalions were faced with an even more formidable series of obstacles. On the Bellevue spur, an outthrust from the main Passchendaele Ridge, the German pill-boxes were in a particularly commanding position. Nevertheless the attack at first went well. The Canadians mounted the spur and knocked out the first German pill-boxes. They were well on their way towards their final objectives when the full weight of the German artillery crashed down upon them. The enemy was well aware of the vital importance of holding the Bellevue spur. Both battalions fell back as German units pressed forward to regain their lost positions, but the day was saved by another Canadian V.C., Lieutenant Robert Shankland

(CONT)

NARRATOR:(CONT)

of the 43rd Battalion. He organized his own platoon and two detachments of the 9th Machine Gun Company to hang on to at least one captured foothold on the slopes of the Bellevue Spur.

SHANKLAND, Robert:
43rd

I had one machine gun and a machine gun officer that was wounded, and along the skyline of the ridge down came 50 men and wheeled left, and when they wheeled they couldn't have wheeled more direct on his gun, so I gave them one burst of fire and that was enough.

NARRATOR:

Colonel Shankland is modest. Sergeant-Major Mowat of the 43rd, (who himself won a D.C.M. for knocking out a German pillbox earlier in the day) can supply a few more details.

MOWAT, D.:
43rd

Bobby Shankland was not in the Passchendaele scrap to kick off with them. He was left out on that trip, but we got so badly decimated that him and all the fellows that was left out was called up to act as stretcher-bearers and the Colonel sent him up to find out what actually was wrong and when he got up to that pillbox at Bellevue Spur he saw the Germans coming up the sunken road and was going to come in behind all of us fellows that had passed Bellevue Spur and cut us off, and the Brigade machine gunners was there and he got the Brigade machine gunners to clean out the Germans that was coming up and he saved all the rest of us fellows ahead.

NARRATOR:

The position was held and the third V.C. of the day, won by Captain O'Kelly who led his company of the 52nd battalion to the aid of the 43rd, plugged the gap in the line and enabled the other two battalions to regain their hold on the spur.

Further to the right, across the empty morass of

(CONT)

NARRATOR:(CONT)

the Ravebeek swamp, the Fourth Division had begun the day with a relatively easy advance which went beyond their objectives, but due to the difficulties of the 9th Brigade on Bellevue Spur they were forced to throw back a defensive left flank to protect themselves from fire from the German positions on the other side of the swamp.

CAMERON, Ross:
46th

I think we went about five hundred yards through this sea of mud, and just plodding heavily, and the German machine guns from their pill-boxes, were just slaughtering us right and left. We consolidated on that line by taking our ground sheets and making a flath thing to lie on. That's about all because you couldn't dig in the stuff. You couldn't form any trench or anything like that.

NARRATOR:

From their support positions behind the new front, which the night before had been established as outposts, the 50th battalion saw the tide of victory turning.

TURNER, A.:
50th

I just got nicely started to eat when the German barrage started. This was getting dusk, you see. Well I knew what was coming. It was the counter-attack and for about three minutes I guess this barrage played on us. And then the barrage lifted and we noticed the 46th retreating in perfect order the way we had been trained to do. About half the men would rush back while the others opened a rapid fire, and when they got back they would rush back and the others would open the rapid fire. And there was only about four of us left then, us privates in our platoon. All the rest had been wounded. And I says, "Keep your eye on the front," I says, "and the first Heinies you see, let them have it.

(CONT)

TURNER, A.:(cont)

And just then three Heinies appeared about fifty yards away, and I upped with my rifle and I ripped off the breech cover and there was my mechanism all caked in mud. I scraped away the mud. There was one shell already in the breech and I aimed point blank at them three fellows and all three heads disappeared and then I tried to re-load but I couldn't re-load. So I looked around and there was Tommy Tweed and Corporal Law retreating so I said to young Scar, I said, "There goes the Officer, I guess we can go now," so I tried about three times to get out of that slimy funk-hole and each time I slid back in, you see. Finally I scrambled out and started to run, but I looked around to see if young Scar was coming. He was in the next funk-hole ahead of me, and there was him doing the same thing as I had been doing, trying to get out, and sliding back in. So I rushed back and I grabbed his hand and hauled him out and started to run again. I knew there was a knoll that I could get over and be safe from that machine gun. Next thing I knew I was right in the German barrage again, so I flopped down and waited for it to lift and I kept doing that. As the barrage lifted twenty-five yards each time I'd follow it up, and then I came to our support. It wasn't exactly trenches. It was funk-holes, and I jumped in. Well I got my rifle cleaned and just then one of our officers came along waving a tremendous big revolver and calling, "Follow me, boys." And he was pointing toward the front line. So we climbed out and started off to the front.

SANGSTER, J.Louis:
47th

That's when a lot of our men in the 46th Battalion were taken prisoner and my twin brother was taken. He was in the 46th, you see, and I was in the 47th. He was stationed at the end of the Passchendaele Road with a machine gun and there was fellows on the opposite side of the road in another trench, and when the Germans started coming over my brother and the two crews, they just piled them up till they were piled five and six and seven feet deep until a shell dropped and jammed their guns and they couldn't do any more, and then the Germans started coming out on the road, so the boys grabbed their guns and started to retreat down the Passchendaele Road and my brother was shot in the right leg and broke his leg and he fell. And they took the machine gun from my brother and he was left on the side of the road. But he was taken prisoner and carried over into Passchendaele. And he was exchanged by the Germans on the 24th of May, 1918.

NARRATOR:

Despite these minor reverses, the Canadian line was held, and the next night they set about regaining their final objective, Decline Copse, an objective they had shared with the Australians to their right. This sharing of an objective had led to some confusion.

MARSHALL, D.M.:
44th

The Australians were on the right of the railway and we were on the left. And this Decline Copse was on our side of the front. They put a whole battalion in the front line, the next battalion in support and another one in reserve, and we were the last one; and there were the four Colonels in this pill-box, and they were just jammed in there like sardines. I was supply officer and I was on the floor under a table with somebody's feet on me, but anyhow there was an Australian officer tore into this pill-box and he said, "Who is in command here?" Well there were the four Colonels and of course they looked at each other to see who might be in command, and I remember the 47th Colonel, Francis, he said, "Well, my Battalion is in the front line, I guess I am." He said, "Did you send word back that you'd taken Decline Copse?" He said, "Yes, I did." And the scout officer said, "I want to tell you that you are not in Decline Copse. It's full of Germans." Well that really took the wind out of their sails. So our Colonel, you know, he says, "Well, Colonel Francis is there anything I can do for you?" We were in support, so he said, "Yes. Take Decline Copse." So he said, "Marshall, Marshall, where is Marshall?" So I said, "Here I am, under the table." So he gets up. He says, "You go and tell Kerr, Charlie Kerr with 'A' Company to proceed with Decline Copse and take it." So we started out, my batman and myself, with this message to Kerr. And you know, these French farms, all their buildings were made in the form of a square and in the centre of the square was a pool for everything. All the refuse from the household, stable, everything else was dumped in there so that they could fertilize their land in the spring, and these things would be oh maybe four or five feet deep, and we got to this farm, you see, and I fell into this thing. Well it was too thick to swim in and too thin to walk on and

(CONT)

MARSHALL, D.M.:(cont) and I thought what a nice way to die in this war after all this time, to get drowned in this. Well my batman, he was pretty good, he unhooked the sling of his rifle and threw the rifle out to me and I was able to grab a hold of it and with one way or another I got dragged out of this thing. Well I got the message to Charlie. He said, "You can leave any time." And I went back and they wouldn't let me in this pill-box. Anyhow, Charlie Kerr went ahead and they took Decline Copse.

NARRATOR: At 5.50 A.M. on the 30th October the second attack began. Supported by a tremendous barrage from the artillery, the 12th Brigade advanced through the mud on the Canadian right to positions on the main Passchendaele Ridge which overlooked the village of Passchendaele itself. The 85th battalion had taken over from the 44th at Decline Copse, on the Corps boundary, beside the Australians.

OUTHOUSE, E.:
85th

We went through what had been a woods and of course the trees were all shot to pieces, and great big chunks of mud were going in the air and I thought that morning that I was hit a dozen times, but actually I never had a mark when I got over. I came out of that Passchendaele racket with four holes through my clothes and not a scratch on my hide.

KILPATRICK, G.C.D.:
42nd

Strangely enough the mud was, in a sense, our friend because in the excessively heavy shell fire the shells plunked into the ground, went down deep, exploded and sent a vast column of mud into the air, but there was no lateral spread which is the fatal thing in shell fire on hard ground.

NARRATOR: In the centre the 78th Battalion also pressed forward.

BROWN, Archie:
78th

The barrage was very very heavy. I must have gone about fifty yards ahead of the trench when something exploded, and the next thing I remembered I was in a shellhole, and my leg was around my neck. I untangled myself, noticed that the bomb bag on my right-hand side was shattered, and there was a hole in my steel helmet. There was blood running down my face from a gouge in my forehead, but otherwise I seemed to be intact, and about one hundred yards ahead I could see the troops moving forward and, by the looks of the way it was behind, I figured it was safer to go ahead. So I stepped along and I caught up to my unit. Eventually we got up over the crest of Passchendaele Ridge, our objective, and we proceeded to dig in.

There was a valley about a mile across down below and a ridge on the other side. The Germans started a counter-attack from there and they were coming down on the other side in mass formation. Our machine guns had all been knocked out but they were there, and having had experience with machine guns at Camp Hughes I eventually broke them all down on a groundsheet and I got one that would operate. I went out on a knoll with the Major's batman and we started playing the machine gun on the attack. The 85th Battalion were over on our right and they hadn't got consolidated there. The 72nd on our left, I think they had because they were playing havoc with this counterattack, so it stopped before it got within five hundred yards of us anyway.

NARRATOR:

Across the Ravebeek, in the centre of the Canadian front, the PPCLI and the 49th Battalion had found the going harder.

MORRISON, Byron:
49th

I was on the north side of the road and the Pats were on the south side on the right. Their first wave, when we jumped off, they were just mowed down like wheat.

NIVEN, H.:
PPCLI

There were five pill-boxes on the hill facing us, and these were all manned but we captured those five pill-boxes, and we finally ended at the top of the hill at Meetcheele pill-box. I think about 150 men got to the top of the hill.

NARRATOR:

In the swampland on the left of the Canadian front, the 5th Canadian Mounted Rifles advanced with great difficulty towards Vapour Farm, their final objective. Reduced to communicating with his Battalion Headquarters by carrier pigeon, Major George Pearkes, who had risen from the rank of Private, was awarded the Victoria Cross for his exploits in holding the hard-won Canadian positions. It was a well-earned tribute to a man whose leadership and courage had already made him a legend throughout the Canadian Corps.

PEARKES, G. R.:
5 CMR

I'd been up all that night before. I had liaised with the battalion on my left. They were the Royal Naval Division but they hadn't had very much experience with trench warfare. I don't think they ever got more than a few yards out of their front line trench. We saw no movement of them coming forward at all so our flank was completely exposed, and that's why I had to detail a platoon to go across and take Source Farm, which was a rather commanding position on a little bit of high and dry ground where the enemy were bringing their enfilade machine gun fire on us. There were only a few Germans in there, and they surrendered when our people came in from the back. We tried to go on. A Corporal went ahead and tried to get to the top but he was shot by snipers, and you could see the snipers on a little bit higher ground over to the right of us, and I only had about a dozen men there and it was a question of holding on the best we could. There were three distinct counter-attacks. How we stopped them I don't know. We attributed it largely to the effective fire of our own machine guns who were in rear and in position. We were all firing. I remember vividly taking a rifle from one man who'd become a casualty there, but the Germans were obviously in the same exhausted condition as our men had been, and there was no spirit or drive in their counter-attack.

NARRATOR:

As on the 26th, three Canadians won the Victoria Cross on the 30th of October. Sergeant Harry Mullin of the PPCLI and Lieutenant Hugh McKenzie of the 7th Machine Gun Company, another former member of the PPCLI joined Major Pearkes of the Mounted Rifles.

By evening, after casualties of 884 killed, 1,429 wounded, and 8 taken prisoner, the troops were consolidated on their new line. Step by weary step, the line was advancing as planned, and the attacking units were relieved by the support battalions of their respective brigades. The 42nd battalion, the Black Watch of Canada, took over a section of the 7th Brigade front to hold the gains which their brother battalions had won. They weren't content with that. On the 31st of October they made their own attack.

KILPATRICK, G.C.D.:
42nd

On our right there was a very strong position called Graf House and it was decided that the Battalion would attack and clean up that defensive position. There were seven parties of about ten men apiece detailed various aspects of this approach and attack. Five of them got lost in the pitch darkness and in the unmarked mud territory but two of them arrived, chief being that under Meyer T. Cohen. Meyer T. Cohen advanced on Graf House with Corporal Taylor and twenty-five other ranks. They attacked Graf House and the garrison fled but only temporarily. They came back with two tremendous counter-attacks and in the second of these Cohen was shot dead with a bullet through the abdomen. All the ammunition was gone. There were only four men left but they held Graf House and when the reinforcements came up there was little Meyer dead at his gun and the Germans lying about him. That attack on Graf House had a very serious effect on the German plans because they had three huge raiding parties ready to advance on our flank and this attack on Graf House disorganized the whole thing so that Meyer didn't die in vain. It was a magnificent last stand.

NARRATOR:

Because of the nightmare conditions which prevailed at Passchendaele, General Currie had decided that the normal duration of tours in the line should be drastically reduced. No unit took part in more than one attack. Having completed their task they withdrew to reserve positions. Going out was almost as bad as coming in.

SCOTT, Stewart:
78th

You find the area of the duckboards that you remember of three or four days before, then this terrible fifth-class road, and then you get to what must be the Menin Road because it is the only main highway, and it is chock full of troops. Mark you, you are on your own. You might only have two sections of your platoon with you. God knows where the other two sections are. They started out with you but Joe Spivak fell into a shellhole, you see, and damn near drowned, so three or four fellows waited to pull him up. You have been on the move, you see, since ten o'clock at night and along about dawn at six you see your bivouac area at Hell Fire Corner at Ypres. Mind you it's pretty mucky but you just don't give a damn and you just lie down, soak to the skin, utterly exhausted. If you are lucky you might crawl under a wagon to keep the rain off your face. And you are sound asleep just in no time at all. And there is your splendid Battalion, that had fought so gloriously at Passchendaele just three days before, just a bunch of tired old men, average age of 25, waterlogged, depleted in spirit, and absolutely beaten. Human endurance was stretched to the limit.

NARRATOR:

During the first week of November the 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions moved into the salient to take over the Passchendaele front. The relief of the exhausted 3rd and 4th Divisions was completed by the morning of the 5th of November and the two fresh formations prepared for the third attack to take place on the 6th.

BOTTRILL, W.E.:
4th

We were to go to Bellevue before the attack so there would be somebody there in the event of a counter-attack that the first people couldn't contain. The leading platoon of my Company, the Officer was a fellow by the name of Berry, Clive Berry. Poor Clive had got off the road and he was in mud. And I called down, I said, "Is that you, Berry?" And he said, "Yes." I says "For God's sake get out of there. They were shelling it a few minutes ago." "You show me how to get out." So I was on the road there and I said, "Well, try and get out this way." And you know he was so badly stuck that he had several of his men stuck with him trying to get him out. Men that were trying to pull other men out got in themselves.

CLARK, Gregory:
4 CMR

Everything turned into porridge, a ghastly dreadful porridge, thigh-deep, in which if you got hit on the shoulder blade with a bullet that merely knocked you unconscious for two minutes, you drowned. We lost lots of men who simply drowned because they were knocked over or stunned and couldn't be recovered before they'd sunk in the mud.

FERRIE, R.:
31st

You would pass somewhere and the water would move a little and you would see mens' heads bobbing up and down drowned in sloughs, whether they were wounded or killed first we don't know, of course, and they had been there for some little time.

FENNEL, L.R.:
27th

I remember walking along and these wounded men hanging on to the end of these duckboards with their body about half submerged in the mud, and some of these fellows not knowing they were there would step on their fingers, you know, and the screams, Oh Golly! It just haunts you, you know, but - strict orders, you couldn't help them. You couldn't do a damn thing. You just had to keep going.

KILPATRICK, G.C.D.:
42nd

One thing about Passchendaele I'll never forget was the endurance, the fortitude and the courage of the stretcher bearers. The Doctor and I were in a pill-box right behind the front line and word came in that a fellow was wounded out on the left flank and I went out with another fellow to bring him in. Now it was only four hundred yards but when we got that fellow back to our pill-box I was absolutely and utterly all in. Yet these stretcher-bearers were going from the front line

(CONT)

KILPATRICK, G.C.D.:
(cont)

to Waterloo Redoubt, which was three miles behind the line, over these indescribable conditions. They were doing it six and seven times a day, which means a mileage of nearly twenty miles under those appalling conditions. I don't know how the human frame stood up to it and their courage and cheerfulness and care for the wounded was simply beyond words.

NARRATOR:

A specific example of this sort of individual thing clings in the mind from Crest Farm.

HINES, H.:
72nd

One of the Battalion runners, he might have been 18, but he looked more like 15, one of these little angelic-faced boys but with remarkable guts, came into the Headquarters at Passchendaele from one of the Companies with his message and he handed it to me. I didn't particularly notice he handed it with his left hand, and when I opened the message, the message had a cut across it and there was blood on it. I said, "Where did the blood come from?" He said, "I don't know. I dropped it in the mud. Maybe I dropped it on somebody." I said, "Show me your right hand." The hand that had been carrying the message, the fingers were off of it, and he was going to go out on another run without even saying a word about it.

NARRATOR:

On the morning of the 6th, the third attack swept forward. On the right of the line, the 5th and 6th Brigades advanced on Passchendaele Village. It went extremely well.

McKNIGHT, G.:
26th

The barrage started at six in the morning. It was terrific. I remember turning around and looking back and everything seemed to be on fire. My platoon was supposed to have its left flank on the Passchendaele Church. That was our landmark. We jumped off at six o'clock and, if I remember rightly, it was noontime before we consolidated and we only went two thousand yards but you couldn't get any faster. You'd go up to your knees in mud and you couldn't get out of the mud. There was nothing left of the village, it was

(CONT)

McKNIGHT, G.:(cont) absolutely flat. When we got there the church had been hit several times. I remember we got about eighteen or twenty prisoners up out of the basement of the church, but that's as far as we got and then we couldn't dig a trench because if you dug a trench you had a brook, so all we could do was just man the lips of the shellholes.

NARRATOR: To the left of the 26th, the 27th Battalion swept on past the village.

TURNER, W.E.:
27th We went through the village and down to the swamp on the other side. Some of the Germans had tried to get away and they were trying to get across this swamp. They must have thought they could make it but they couldn't. They were just going too slowly in there. Things weren't too rough at the time and we weren't feeling too bad about it and we shouted for them to come back but they wouldn't, so there was nothing that we could do, we had to finish them off. We gave them a chance but they wouldn't take it. Unfortunately, by this time our own barrage was not doing a good job and we were getting a tremendous number of short shells, so the Sergeant, he said, "You'll have to go back and find Company Headquarters and tell them." So I went back and found Company Headquarters and gave them the message.

NUTTER, Jack:
Artillery Communications were extremely poor. And unless you can observe and send the news back to the battery, well some of our troops were killed with our own fire, and we couldn't do anything about it.

NARRATOR: Despite the success of the attack, casualties, as usual, were high.

HOLDER, G.K.K.:
26th Two hours after we went up over the top we didn't have an officer left in "A" Company. We went in there with a hundred and thirty men and came out with thirty. It was mostly shell fire, very little machine gun fire. I didn't see a German till after daylight and they were the ones that were trying to get across the swamp and that's when we were nailing them.

NARRATOR: On the left of the Second Division's front the 28th Battalion was equally successful, but when they had consolidated they had a more difficult time.

ROSS, Alex:
28th We had to sit there until dark in shellholes, broken ground, and had a new form of attack this time that we hadn't been accustomed to, that was low-flying aeroplanes. They came over and did quite a lot of damage, machine gunning, and for some reason or other we were not able to chase them away.

MacFARLANE, A.I.:
52nd At Passchendaele our Air Force was practically nil.

O'NEILL, Joe:
19th The Germans had complete control of the skies.

BAKER, Stanley:
54th We lined up at the cook wagon and German planes drove us away five times before we got our breakfast.

O'NEILL, Joe.:
19th There was a German plane come over. He wasn't, oh fifty, a hundred feet up. Well you could see the buttons on his uniform we were so close and he leaned over the side of the plane and he waved at us and we waved at him.

MacFARLANE, A.I.:
52nd They'd fly right up and down the trench looking at us.

NARRATOR: To the left the First Division encountered little trouble. They had passed the village of Mosselmarkt and won their main objectives by 8 o'clock in the morning, but the epic struggles of Passchendaele were not the main assaults. They were the personal battles of the weary men who fetched and carried along the slimy duckwalks.

BOTTRILL, W.E.:

4th

We were instructed to furnish a party of fifty men to pick up 25,000 rounds of ammunition and get it up to the 1st Battalion, two men to a box. I have no way of knowing what length of time I spent on a stretch of road that probably was less than a mile but I must have been on it for several hours. There would be a spurt of intense artillery fire and we were beginning to lose some of our own people. It became such utter confusion. Time and memory and everything else just simply dissolved into nothing. I have no way of knowing precisely and exactly how many casualties we suffered but it ended up with one Corporal, two men and myself. There was a pill-box a quarter of a mile short of the village and I was to check in there for further instructions as to what to do with this 25,000 rounds of ammunition which was now one thousand. We got up to this place and when we reached it we were so physically exhausted that we put that one box of ammunition on the concrete. The men sat on it and I said to the men, I said, "You just stay here. I'm going into the pill-box to find out what we do next." The entrances to it were facing the enemy so the back was now the front. I got around a corner and I saw the most shocking thing I ever saw in all my service in the army. Everybody on that side of the pill-box where the entrances were was dead. Those men were just piled one on top of the other and I had to get down on my hands and knees and crawl over the top of them to get through the nearest hole. The people that were inside were utterly dazed with the concussion, and I said, "Well, these fellows can't be any more help to me, I've just got to figure this thing out for myself." I went out and I didn't tell the men what I had found on the other side. I just got them away from there so they couldn't see what was there and we got to the road and we pushed on.

Well just a little short of the village was a place called Graf Farm and when we got closer to it I saw a little glimmer of light and I went in and I found three scouts from the 1st Battalion, and the first thing I said to them, "Do you know where any of your people are? And they said, "Yes, we've got a pretty fair idea." I said, "We've only got one box of ammunition. We started out with twenty-five and I'm most anxious that at least this one shall get to somebody." And they said, "Well, don't worry about it. When you go we'll take over from you and we'll take it up," which is what they did.

NARRATOR:

It was almost over. On the 10th November, the Second Brigade completed the Canadian operations at Passchendaele by advancing beyond the well-named Vindictive crossroads and clearing the last German troops from the top of Passchendaele Ridge. On the 14th November the relief of the Canadians began. Weeks before these men had walked into a nightmare. The nightmare was still there as they struggled back.

ALBON, C.J.:
25th

Well you could hear men hollering all over the place, men calling for help and you couldn't help them. You couldn't do anything to help them. Somebody would push you off the duckboard walk because you weren't losing any time getting out of there. And that night when we got out to Ypres and there was no place to stay there I remember falling into a little funk hole in the ground and, boys, it was a home. I didn't even take my great coat off. I just shoved my pack up under my head and went to sleep and it didn't take long. I woke up in the morning and I was laying in about three inches of water. Been raining all night. It didn't make any difference. I didn't know.

NARRATOR:

Well, it was over. Another day, another Ridge. But it was not like Vimy. There was certainly no elation. A sense of achievement, yes, and as General Pearkes recalls it, for some a sense of pride.

PEARKES, G.R.:
5 CMR

I think there was a feeling, "Well we're going to do something which other people have not been able to do. We were going to get to the top of Passchendaele Ridge and we did it." So we were very proud of ourselves.

NARRATOR:

If they thought about it at all, most Canadian troops were too exhausted and numb to feel anything. What had really been gained? And was it really worth it?

HIGGINS, D.C.:

Artillery

It's just beyond my ability to describe to human beings today the conditions of this area and the stupidity of it. I've learned since the whys and wherefores to take the pressure off the French armies, but even at that I think we could have found a more original way of doing it.

POPE, M.A.:

Engineers

I think that the original idea was that the Passchendaele fighting which began much earlier that summer would clear the coast and reduce the submarine menace, take pressure off the French and the hopes of a break-through but I think that the persistence with which the battle was continued in conditions where we were trying to fight in a swamp, I hope I'm not uncharitable when I say that it seemed to me to be unimaginative obstinacy.

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:

Corps Arty.

Well a lot of the trouble, of course, in this kind of fighting was the fact that the senior commanders didn't know what the situation was in the front line. It was told me at the time that Charteris, Haig's Chief of Intelligence, had come up part way on the front and when he saw the conditions of filth and slime in which people lived, he broke down and cried and said, "My, I never realized that this was what we were ordering men into.

PHILPOTT, Elmore:

Artillery

That was the low point of the war from the point of view of our generalship because these stupid idiots were sending us out this stuff in mimeograph form about how many men we'd lost and how many men the Germans had lost and they had it figured out in some kind of a mathematical formula. We were killing more Germans than they were killing British and so on and I can remember one of the wits in our battery saying, "Wouldn't it be hades if some of these birds were out in their calculations, you know", which of course they were.

Passchendaele was the most ghastly and hopeless mess. It was worse than we had anticipated. It was really hell on earth.

KILPATRICK, G.D.C.:
42nd

Passchendaele, I would say without hesitation, was the most brutal and horrible experience of the Canadian Corps in the entire war.

ADAMS, Tommy G.:
85th

It was just a complete nightmare of mud, slush and everything else. It was frightful, and if I'd been in for a week I'm sure I'd have gone mad because if you had imagination that place was like Dante's Inferno. Terrible thing!

NARRATOR:

It was a bad moment, the true low point of the war. Were they beaten? Did they feel the whole thing was pointless? Not as they recall it.

LEACH, Richard J.:
Corps Arty.

Although we knew the whole thing was futile, yet for some reason it didn't seem to depress the morale. I had no trouble with my men over it and the only thing that I can think of is that we'd got so damn used to this mode of life that we just took it as a matter of course. Having been in so many shows where there was at the best, partial success, the ordinary person didn't expect success.

PHILPOTT, Elmore:
Artillery

I don't think there was any despair, such a thing as that we were going to lose the war. It never occurred to anybody.

STEVENS, G.R.:
PPCLI

There was a sort of twilight on the Gods effect about it, and yet there was something, and I can only think it was discipline, that sustained us. We were a good regiment. We knew it, and I think that was all that was necessary to sustain us. We then had among the University Company boys, three chaps, from Harvard, and in this awful ghastly place I found them discussing with every appearance of interest the works of Robert Browning. I had lost most of my friends but on felt well, as they say today, "That's just the way the ball bounces." There came with time a sort of deadening.

HIGGINS D.C.:
Artillery

I would say that people came out of Passchendaele simply numb. Numb! Mentally and physically! And I wouldn't have thought that many of us would have recovered from it but "c'est la guerre" and one good leave does an awful lot for a man, you know.

THOMAS, O.J.:
54th

The conditions at Passchendaele were just about the worst that you could possibly have anywhere. And yet those men they were just as cheerful as they could be, and they always were. It just seemed to be that after you had been there a few months it became a way of life, and while you wrote home and thought of home the idea of ever getting home just didn't occur to you, and so they just made the best of it. They were always in such good spirits no matter what they went through.

NARRATOR:

Next week we pause in this chronology of battle to review the bitter lessons that had been learned in three years of fighting on the Western Front and what application was being given this hard-earned knowledge by the High Command.

Next week, "NEW TECHNIQUES AND OLD DELUSIONS".

ANNOUNCER:

The first-person accounts of WORLD WAR I were researched, arranged and edited under the direction of Frank Lalor.

The series, originated by A. E. Powley, is written, narrated and produced by J. Frank Willis.

ANNOUNCER:

Ladies and gentlemen: "FLANDERS' FIELDS", Chapter 11, "NEW TECHNIQUES AND OLD DELUSIONS".

NARRATOR:

This week "FLANDERS' FIELDS" takes time out from the chronological order of the battles of the First World War to discuss the wider problems of military tactics and weaponry, and the leaders who dealt with these problems.

After the costly and pyrrhic victory at Passchendaele in 1917, which is sometimes called the Third Battle of Ypres, even the most optimistic observer was compelled to admit that the war was not going well. The massive British offensive of 1916 and '17 designed to achieve a breakthrough had resulted in minor gains of no strategic importance, at a cost in human life which placed all the wars of history in a totally different dimension.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

I can forgive the Somme, but I cannot forgive Passchendaele, because the same mistakes were made over again, in a more exaggerated form, and Passchendaele had no value strategically in the over-all picture of the war. None whatsoever. They laid the blame on the French, who demanded that they would attack there to relieve Verdun. Well now I don't think that that holds water, because when you are going to commit an army you fight where you are going to win. You don't fight where you are not going to win. And that was not a place to win.

MACDONNELL, J.M.:
Arty.

"Good morning, good morning, the General said,
When we met him last week on our way to the line.
Now the soldiers he smile at are most of them dead,
And we're cursing his staff for incompetent swine.
He's a cheery old card, grunted Harry to Jack,
As they slogged up to Arras with rifle and pack.
But he did for them both with his plan of attack."

As the war went on we were inclined more and more to be very critical of the High Command, most of whom were cavalrymen. I remember very well going back to England during 1917 to an old friend in Oxford and he used a phrase I've never forgotten. He spoke about the Cavalry Generals with their "savage vanity." We got so tired of hearing that the cavalry would go through, but I would ask anyone who indulges in unrestrained criticism to ask himself one simple question, "What would you have done if you had been responsible at that time?" Were the Generals to say, "We don't know how to carry on this war. We've got to wait until new weapons can be invented." There they were with a barbed wire fence from Switzerland to the sea. The ordinary methods of outflanking, which I suppose had been part of almost every great victory in the past, were not possible.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

There were two very important factors in that war, the machine gun and barbed wire, because they stabilized the battlefield. Now a battlefield without movement stabilizes tactics. The battles become nothing more than slugging matches. So it did not produce the generalship you would expect.

ORMOND, D.M.:
10th

In that stabilized warfare the trenches had wire in front of them four feet high and a hundred yards deep and heavy barbed wire, much heavier than the cattle wire they use in the West.

NARRATOR:

And behind that wire were rows of German trenches manned with German machine guns, with gunners tense and ready to annihilate lines of men attempting to cut their way through. The weapons of defense had caught up with the weapons of attack. The result was a deadly

(CONT)

NARRATOR:(CONT)

stalemate. But there are those who believe that within the limitations set by that stalemate there were opportunities for manoeuvre of which no use was made. Among them is Major General Worthington.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

If you are going to be attacked a great way of upsetting an enemy's plan is to retire just before the attack. The Germans did that in 1917, and the British were ready to make that huge attack and then suddenly we didn't hit anybody. It wasn't there. One of the things that seems to have grown into warfare in the first war was the refusal to manoeuvre, give ground at all. The great Generals of the past didn't give a hoot about that. Wellington, one of his greatest things was that he would fight and then he would give ground. He would retire for miles and miles and the French would follow him, and then he would go back at them and drive them back again. Marlborough did the same thing and all the great Generals. They cared nothing about ground, as such.

NARRATOR:

Even among the Generals of the First World War there were some who remembered this classic military maxim. They got short shrift from their peers and among them was a man named Smith-Dorrien.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

Smith-Dorrien was an outstandingly good General, and when he in his appreciation said that the British should move out of the Ypres Salient about the time when it was evident the Germans were going to use this gas, they thought he'd lost his nerve, and they removed him. And everything he said in his appreciation was right. Had the British moved back, given up the Salient, which was no damn good to anyone except a good big graveyard, the Germans' attack would have been up in the air.

STEVENS, G.R.:
PPCLI

I don't think Allied Generalship ever thought in terms of dynamic movement. You were first of all bound to the old distinction between infantry and cavalry. The cavalry was the mobile arm. The infantry was a consolidating arm. Now against a machine gun a cavalry man was twice the mark that an infantry man was, which meant that he was only half as mobile as the infantry. It was almost impossible to convince the cavalry man that times had changed, that he was no longer the master of the battlefield. They would say, "Well, you chaps just get them out of these first few lines of trenches so our horses will be able to get in the open and then we'll do the rest," but every time it was the same. A machine gun started to clatter from the shelter of a wheat field or something like that, and horses and men went down.

JACOBS, A.G.:
LSHG

The fact that they had horse cavalry in the country was crazy, although by a fluke when the Fifth Army caved in the fact that the horse could carry men happened to be very useful. They had a mobile force but they still looked upon us as cavalry and the idea of horses galloping against machine guns, well we who have seen it know how ridiculous it is.

PHILPOTT, Elmore:
Arty.

Practically all the junior officers resented the way they ran the war and we thought that if we'd have been running it we could have made a better job of it and we all believed in this idea of the war of manoeuvre. When Byng tried it out at the same time as Passchendael he demonstrated that it would work. It was just suicidal what they did at Passchendaele and what they might have done otherwise.

NARRATOR:

What Sir Julian Byng had done otherwise was to drive a great hole through the German front in the area of Cambrai. The design of the former Commander of the Canadian Corps was imaginative and forehadowed future developments. Instead of bombarding the German barbed wire for days with artillery, Byng achieved complete surprise, that almost forgotten factor, by using three

(CONT)

NARRATOR:(CONT)

hundred tanks to smash down the wire, and lead the infantry through. It was the first use of massed tanks in history. By evening on the 20th November, the Third Army had advanced three to four miles on a six-mile front breaching the Hindenburg lines.

There are those who believe with Brigadier General Alexander Ross, that had the Canadian Corps been held for use at Cambrai, as at one time was contemplated, instead of being used to salvage a dubious pseudo victory at Passchendaele, the results might have been even more spectacular. General Byng's great weakness was a lack of adequate reserves to exploit his initial victory.

ROSS, Alex.:
27th

We were the only fresh outfit in France and when the British with their depleted divisions were able to achieve such success I thought we might have done better. We might have got to Cambrai.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

Cambrai was a nodal point of communications and the German army would have been cut almost in half if that had happened. Strategically, it would have meant that the Germans couldn't supply their line up and down. They would have no way of moving up their reinforcements. I believe that if that had happened at that time there would have been a general retreat in the German Army. Had that battle been fought instead of Passchendaele, where we sacrificed three hundred thousand men - and that's a lot of men, then I believe the war would have ended in 1917.

NARRATOR:

Brigadier General Ross has one qualification to add to his previously stated opinion.

ROSS, Alex.
27th

Remember they couldn't have succeeded at Cambrai had they not had this concentration exhausting the German divisions in the north.

NARRATOR:

And Major General Odlum goes even further.

ODLUM, V.W.:
11th Inf.Bgde.

I don't think that the end of the war was in sight then. The situation was not ready for a break-through because the Germans still had enough of the fighting spirit in them. They would have sealed the hole again just as we did at Ypres. The break in the German spirit had to come.

NARRATOR:

One of the great problems of the First World War which hampered swift exploitation, was the slowness of communication. There were no radios. Telephone lines were constantly being broken by enemy artillery, and the only dependable means of getting news from the front to the controlling Headquarters was relays of runners hurrying back and forth through the shell fire on their own two feet. Cambrai was a good example. The success of the tanks and the infantry was to be followed by the whole of the Cavalry Corps who were to ride through the breach in the line and isolate Cambrai. The advance was led by the Canadian Cavalry Brigade, but due to a confusion of orders, information, and delays due to the collapse of the Masnières Bridge, only one squadron of the Fort Garrys got across the river, through a bridgehead held by the Royal Newfoundland Regiment.

ELKINS, W.H.P.:
RCHG

The Cavalry Corps was commanded from a point about five miles back of us. It took a long time for them to get the situation. The Higher Command behind us didn't realize the opportunity that perhaps existed there. I went back and told my General of this thing and he said, "Well, we'll have to wait for orders, of course. I can't take it on." But I think that he agreed with me that we had an opportunity there. I think we'd have got Cambrai. We were right under Cambrai, you know at the time. It was just up a long slope from us but that's where we stopped. It was most successful from our point of view.

NARRATOR:

But not successful enough. Due to the depleted condition of the British armies, the Germans won the battle of reinforcements, forced a withdrawal of the British troops and sealed the breach in their line. Yet it had not been a total failure nor had it been a costly one. Even more important as an experiment by an imaginative commander, it had proved the worth of the weapon which would one day abolish trench warfare.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

The tank it was that restored movement to the battle-field, because the tank could go right through the barbed wire. They used to have big hooks on behind and lift the wire up and pull the damn stuff. One of these big tanks would have half-mile of wire behind it. They never neutralized the machine gun until the tank came along and it was the destroyer of machine guns.

NARRATOR:

How had the tank come about?

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

How the British came about it was: a man named Swinton, he was a Major General, a man with imagination. This man Swinton was coming back after the first Battle of Ypres - he told me this himself - and he saw a big 60-pounder gun with a big team of mules trying to pull it out of a ditch, and he stopped his car and watched that,

(CONT)

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
(cont)

you see, and then a tractor came along and hooked on this thing, pulled the damn gun out of the ditch and crossed the ditch itself. So he went back with the idea that this was the answer; and he tried to sell it to War Office, but he couldn't. But he went to the First Lord of the Admiralty, a man whom you've probably heard of, called Winston Churchill. And Winston Churchill, being a man of imagination he saw the possibility of having land ships and using the Marines. If it hadn't been for him there wouldn't have been a tank.

NARRATOR:

The first time the tank was used was on 15th September 1916 at the Somme, the day the Canadians took Courcellette. General Brutinel, a French officer serving with the Canadians, about whom we shall hear more later, had foreshadowed the development of a mobile armoured force with his Motor Machine Gun Brigade. He approved of the tank but, in common with Winston Churchill, felt its use at the Somme was premature.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

Brutinel felt that there was no reason or object to use them at the Battle of the Somme which had reached the stage of stalemate, and he also felt that to use them in small numbers was purely giving away a secret. His idea was, as he said, improve the mechanical efficiency of these things, then use them in large numbers. Break right through the enemy's lines and then you have an open field for any mobile force that wants to go through. Now, he was so right, because that is exactly what happened when they used the tanks at the Battle of Cambrai. The only thing different was that the British didn't have anything behind them to go through. The man saw these things and others couldn't see it.

STEVENS, G.R.:
PPCLI

They were thrown in holus-bolus in little penny packets in the first instance. If the tanks had not been used until you had enough of them, and had you massed as General Byng wanted to mass, highly mobile troops plus the cavalry, I think a hole might have been punched and the line might have collapsed, because once you got into the open, the rear echelon, that is your supply service and such of the Germans was almost indefensible -

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

In that one battle of Cambrai on the 20th of November 1917, we captured as much ground in twenty-four hours as the whole battle of Passchendaele for three months battling and a quarter of a million dead. Even those people who were dyed-in-the-wool anti-tank, they couldn't back away from that.

NARRATOR:

Nearly a year later, on the 8th of August 1918, the Allied Armies would at last achieve the long-hoped for breach in the German lines and one hundred days after that, the First World War would be over.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

Ludendorff, I think it was, said, "I was not defeated by General Foch but by General Tank." People will say 'no' to that, but if you study it carefully, with an open mind, you find that the tank was the winning factor. One of the proofs of that is this, that after March 1918, when the British Army was badly beaten, Plan 1919 was developed. There was going to be no further offensive operations on the Western Front until they could build up a mechanized army, a tank army. Now that was the plan. But it never came about because there was an astonishing little battle took place on the 1st of July, 1918, a tank battle, of straightening a salient out. They had made three attempts to straighten it out and lost a great many men, and tanks straightened the thing out in two hours, at a loss of thirteen men as opposed to a thousand or so. That brought the seed of the 8th of August. The most astonishing thing is to see the effect on casualties when we started to use the tanks correctly. For example, in the Battle of the Somme, in the first day of that battle we lost 60,000 men, but on the battle of the 8th of August 1918, where the tanks were used, with the infantry, where we broke the German Army, where we won the war on that one battle, our casualties in killed for that whole force were just under 1,000 men.

NARRATOR:

Why had it taken so long?

STEVENS, G.R.:
PPCLI

I think our leaders lacked imagination. There is an initial inertia to change in any army, particularly on the top levels, because battle is a great risk, and unless you get a wizard like Napoleon or some of these other Commanders, you'll always have a leader playing safe. I think the German Generals in many ways were just as conservative as ours were and, certainly, the French were conservative. I've talked to many French Officers about Nivelles's offensive, you see, which was to make ten miles in a day, was to blast the line to pieces in forty-eight hours, and not one of them believed in it and, as a consequence, it was a ghastly failure.

NARRATOR:

How did the men in the trenches feel? After all these years of frustration, what did they think of their leaders?

STEVENS, G.R.:
PPCLI

There was disillusion but, regarding Canadians, it was rather a sardonic disillusion. There was nothing bitter in it. There was nobody like Siegfried Sassoon who got up and said in one of his verses:

"Goodbye old lad, remember me to God,
And tell Him that our politicians swear
We won't give in till Prussian rule's been trod
Under the heel of England. Are you there?
Yes, and the war will last for four years more
But we've got stacks of men. I'm blind with tears
Staring into the dark. Cheer-o!
I wished they'd killed you on a decent show."

There you had an attitude, you see, which was typically English, and I think there was a greater degree of disillusion and bitterness in the north of England than anywhere else. The Australians had it in considerable measure but I never noticed it in the New Zealanders whatsoever. I did notice it to a certain extent in the South Africans, who had a magnificent Brigade, but yet having been cut to pieces three times by bad generalship they made the finest stand of the war probably, in Gough's army when Winston Churchill describes them as an iron peg driven into stony ground, immovable. So the disillusionment didn't necessarily affect the fighting quality of Commonwealth troops.

STALLARD, S.:
25th

We always understood that the big staff behind was crazy. We always understood that, because they done such damn silly things that we used to get woolly, but of course we couldn't say much. We were up the line. They were behind. They said, "Oh, you do this." You couldn't say anything. You had to do it.

JACOBS, A.G.:
LSHG

They never fired a senior. Think how long it took them before they could convince themselves that they should have a French Commander who could give orders to Haig. Haig, a cavalry man of the best traditions who lost a lot of men in Africa and therefore there was no reason why he shouldn't lose a lot of men in France.

NARRATOR:

Along with many other old soldiers, Major General George Pearkes, V.C., disagrees.

PEARKES, George:
5 CMR

As far as I was concerned, why Haig was a hero. I looked upon him as the personification of what a General should be. And Haig is still my hero. They can write all they like about him, but I just don't believe it.

ODLUM, V.W.:
11th Inf.Bgde.

I admire Haig because he was the King-pin around which that steadfast conduct of that war was carried out. Had there been another man there, a man with too much imagination, we might have been seriously hurt, but Haig made it sure that there was not going to be a break-through on the German part and, in doing that, he also made it reasonably sure that there could not be a break-through on our part. The result was it had to go to a war of casualties, but I have a great admiration for that steadfast command, that unwillingness to be exploited or to be excited. Haig stayed put.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

Well I think that Haig and French were both the products of the times. In the 19th century about all you demanded of a British officer was to die bravely in war and live socially in peace time. The result of that, only a few men took their career as a profession. Now if a man is a professional Doctor or a professional Lawyer, he studies his business all his life. He passes his examinations out of University and then he still

(CONT)

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
(cont)

continues to read, read, read, and study. A soldier in those days passed out of Sandhurst, and then his student career was over. So if he didn't have the inclination himself to study war, and study and study and study all aspects of war, all the modern equipment which might be coming along and the characteristics of those, if he didn't do that, he rose through seniority and influence, and so we had an upper-crust of men who had not too much ability. I can't attempt to say anything more than the great writers have said about the Generals of all the armies, including the Germans, in the Great War. The trouble was that they were not in touch with their men. They didn't care what happened to them.

NARRATOR:

If there was one Corps in the Allied Armies where that statement did not apply, it was the Canadian Corps. Both Sir Julian Byng and Sir Arthur Currie cared very much what happened to their men.

ROSS, Alex:
27th

Personally I always found General Currie a first-class man. I'm quite sure that he always had the welfare of the troops at heart and, from remarks he's made to me from time to time, I know he had.

COOPER, H.S.:
3rd

My first personal contact with him was when I was training a crowd for a raid, and he'd got the information that he wanted to get, so the raid was going to be called off. Well of course we were all keyed up for the thing. I mean men at war are damn fools so, of course, we coaxed him to not call it off, but he said at that time, he said, "I'm not sacrificing one man where I don't have to." I never forgot that, especially after the war when you heard all this silly nonsense that he sacrificed men uselessly. I mean I would say that it was the very opposite.

CLARK, J.A.:
7th Inf.Bgde.

Everybody with any common sense was going to conserve his force and protect his men from casualties to the absolute limit and that was Currie's theory. That was instilled by him into every Commander, and the Battalion Commanders, of course, they were the key to it because some Battalion Commanders could conserve lives better than others. The man who wasted lives, well, he would lose his job.

O'NEILL, Joe:
19th

The higher you are the harder you fell, which meant that a junior officer might make a mistake and get away with it. He'd just be checked up. But if a senior officer made a mistake he was through. Currie was ruthless on senior officers, which meant that we weren't handicapped by the types of officers sometimes got in to high positions in the Imperial Army because of birth, or because of financial position, or so on. Currie had no use whatever for that type or politically appointed officers. The Canadian politicians who undertook to get the son of my friend John Jones or whoever he was, a commission in France, I happened to know the Corps Orderly Room Sergeant, and he told me he was under orders from General Currie to just receive those letters and put them in a trunk. Currie wouldn't even read them.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

He was not a showman, he was not an inspiring man; but you all knew that you never went into a battle that wasn't very carefully prepared and thought out.

COOPER, H.S.:
3rd

Time after time he wouldn't let the Corps go in unless he was satisfied that everything was done that should be done, so that we'd have a very much odds-on chance of winning, and that's why we did win.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

He didn't think he was God Almighty - and that nobody could tell him anything. He was receptive to ideas.

NARRATOR:

This had also been true of Byng.

ROSS, Alex.:
27th

General Currie was very fortunate in taking over the Corps after General Byng. He revolutionized the whole thing. Gave me new ideas. Things that appealed to my common sense. I have actually seen him come down to the battalion and take a platoon and drill it by himself to show them how it should be done. I never found anybody that was easier to get along with as I did him. He would come into your dugout in the front line, you would take out your maps, you would discuss things, and his ideas were reasonable, and he was interested and would make suggestions and so on. It was all useful.

CAMERON, Ross:
46th

After Currie took command of the Corps we used to see our Brigadiers and our Generals in the lines quite often in battle times. Before that we never saw anybody outside of our own officers. Currie made himself visible an awful lot, too.

ODLUM, V.W.:
11th Inf.Bgde.

General Currie was a man with remarkable intelligence. And when we gathered together under General Currie for discussions he would listen to us as we argued amongst ourselves, and we did argue, but General Currie, in the end, would sum up what we had said and draw deductions from it and say, "This is what we will do", and we knew at once that he was always right. He had that mentality that made it possible for him to pick things up, to listen to others and gather from them.

CLARK, Gregory:
4 CMR

The grand important thing was that he gave us maps, down to Lance-Corporals. Prior to that only officers and gentlemen were allowed to have maps. Currie said, "Maps down to section leaders", because he knew who fights the battles. It's the sections.

MACKLIN, W.H.S.:
19th

I think that he was careful of his troops and a skilfull Commander, but he was not really very able to make the troops believe it. He was about sixfeet two or three and he weighed about three hundred pounds and he always looked too big for his horse and he looked too big for his uniform and he spoke in a somewhat dull way and that is my recollection. He was not an inspiring Commander. I don't think that it was a lack of warmth. I think it was a defect in his training and personality. It struck me very forcibly that he had no sense of humour. He was a very serious man and soldiers like a Commander or an Officer or a Sergeant for that matter, who has a sense of humour and I think that that was, perhaps, a defect in General Currie's personality, that he was lacking in a sense of humour.

POPE, M.A.:
Engineers

I don't think he enjoyed tremendous popularity from all ranks, but I think he commanded their respect and those that were placed fortunately enough to be able to see the direct results of his work knew that he was doing a job darn well.

NEAL, A.M.:
10th

I was standing in the courtyard one time in Equaves and General Currie was taking a stroll through the courtyard one day and there were several of the boys around the courtyard and Currie walked along with his head down looking at the stones in front of him as he was walking, and didn't say anything. I should have brought everybody to attention when Currie was going by because I was a corporal at the time, and he stopped me and asked me why I didn't. That was the military man in him. But do you know what I said to General Currie, "Sir, I thought your mind was otherwise occupied. That is why I did not wish to disturb you." He said, "Thank you, Corporal," and he walked on. Now the man was human. You never met anybody in the position of a General Currie who wasn't a lonely man, and give him credit, he was an illustrious son of Canada and we were very proud of General Currie.

POPE, M.A.:
Engineers

I think a Commander is very much like the leader of an orchestra. Everything must act according to the movements of his baton. Now if the orchestra puts out a bad performance, the leader must take the blame and properly so, but if it gives a fine performance, one must be fair and give him the credit too. If we had failed during Currie's command of the Corps he would have had to take the blame, but we didn't fail, we met with great success and I think to Currie the credit should go.

NARRATOR:

Sir Arthur Currie would have been the first to share his honours with the men who assisted him --

Among these was General McNaughton who helped to make the Canadian Artillery one of the most effective supporting forces on the Allied front. Until the tank was developed, the artillery was the master weapon to smash enemy wire and assist the infantry forward.

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:
Arty.

The fact that brought all the early attacks to literally a bloody catastrophic end and was a combination of two things, machine guns and barbed wire. And you had to get some way to be able to smash your way through the barbed wire and the only possible way to do it in the time available was by gunfire.

NARRATOR: Another Commander of the Canadian Forces in the Second World War, General Crerar, was also an artilleryman in the First.

CRERAR, H.D.G.:
Artillery

I was commanding a battery at the Somme, and the use of guns to cut wire at that time was very inefficient because we used the eighteen-pounder mainly. We cut it by a fused shell and if you didn't get your fuse to go off the right instant in the air, you wouldn't get your bullets to come out the right place and it was very very expensive in ammunition.

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:
Artillery

Once we got 106 fuses, of course, the cutting of the wire to specification by the infantry became child's play. When you have a special task to do, the first thing you want to get is the experts to forget the way they've been doing it, and to go back to utter simplicity, and that's exactly what the 106 fuse was. The 106 fuse was the simplest possible kind of a mechanism for setting the shell off on impact. They got it so that the delay between the time of impact and the shell going off was measured in tens of thousands of a second and the result of that was that when you were firing with high explosive 106 fuses and you got a round striking into barbed wire entanglements you could get the shell to explode bang in the middle of all this and you'd blow whole sections of it out.

NARRATOR: As has often been stated before, the main drawback of using guns to cut wire was the fact that you had to bombard for days before an attack began.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

The artillery preparation gave the enemy complete knowledge of what was happening. There was no surprise, and it is very hard to win a battle without surprise, of some sort.

NARRATOR: There were other disadvantages.

CRERAR, H.D.G.:
Artillery

The actual bombardment with the heavier artillery used to plough up the country in a fantastic way, and that particular question still applied in Vimy. We were due to go forward and there was no real enemy opposition at that time. The whole German area was so ploughed up and so full of shellholes, filled with water, that you couldn't move. I got my battery as far as No Man's Land and I was supposed to be the first battery over the line. We couldn't move, not even with eight horses. It was only towards the end, we'll say with the Amiens August 8th show, 1918, that things started to really loosen up. There was no fire from our guns until the actual zero hour on the 8th, and that was the first experience I had in the Canadian Corps of a vast and, I thought, wonderfully improving change in tactics, though the example was set by Byng in his attack on Cambrai in 1917.

NARRATOR:

One of the greatest advances was the development of the creeping barrage which had almost come to perfection at Vimy in 1917. Moving ahead of the infantry like a protective screen, it enabled them to get close enough to the German trenches before it lifted, to beat the enemy to the draw, as they swarmed up from their deep dugouts. It was just as useful in the war of movement which ended the conflict. Mr. H. L. Sheppard describes an actual barrage map used during that period.

SHEPPARD, H.L.:
Artillery

This is a barrage map, a map of the Cambrai road, and we had to lay our gunfire out from this map. The first line is where the first barrage falls. Zero hour plus three. It means it went there for three minutes, then it lifted a matter of a hundred yards. The guns were raised to go on to the next line, 3 plus 7, you see, that was four minutes there. Then they were raised again after seven minutes to 7 plus 11. That meant there were four minutes there and each one of these is a jump and our infantry are following along behind that wall of fire just as close as they can follow. We worked out the ranges and elevations of the guns for everyone of these steps. They all had to be worked out individually the night before this was fired.

NARRATOR: As the war progressed, artillery control and headquarters staffs became more complicated as well as more flexible.

LEACH, R.J.:
Arty. Corps

To start with, the heavy artillery was attached to each division. Then, about the end of '15 or the beginning of '16, they started what they called Corps Heavy Artillery Headquarters and they took all the heavy artillery out of the divisions and put them under a Corps control. Then, towards the end of '16 they brought in the counter-battery officer, and he lived with the Corps Heavy Artillery Commander, and he specialized in controlling the enemy artillery and harassing fire, and that's where General McNaughton made his name.

MORRISEY, T.S.:
13th

Counter battery means when the enemy shoots a gun you try to shoot at the gun, and we thought it was wonderful to have our guns shooting at the German guns and the German guns shooting at our guns, instead of shooting at us.

CRERAR, H.D.G.:
Artillery

General McNaughton had a very scientific mind and he applied that to the problem of counter battery which really entailed a great deal of intelligence work beforehand - a searching out of targets and then deciding how best to take them on and with what guns.

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:
Artillery

The guns were not the limiting factor. The acquisition of target information was the limiting factor. When everybody went to ground the ordinary observer, depending on his eyesight or his field glasses, didn't get you very much in the way of target information. You had to develop the other ways of getting target information, like the organization of posts scattered across the front, all linked together and synchronized so that if you saw a flash of an enemy gun you could be sure that all three or four telescopes that you had over ten miles of front were reporting the same flash and then you were asked to read your angles and pass them in. We started flash spotting very early.

PHILPOTT, Elmore:
Artillery

In the early part of the war it was all just a hit and miss business, more or less taking a crack at it, but by the time I got to be an officer it was getting to be a very scientific thing and you were directing your fire by very careful mathematical calculations and so you had to know what you were doing.

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:
Artillery

1917 was a year of application of engineering and science to the technique of war. I think this was a movement almost from below. By the time we had got through the Battle of the Somme, and that bloody fighting that we went through there, the need of a revolutionary change in the tactical methods of conducting battles was obvious to those of us who were lucky enough to come out of it alive, and if any Corps had developed a new way of doing a particular kind of operation they probably hardly hadn't got their boots off until they were being asked to come back and explain the reason for their success.

There was an enquiring mind loose, certainly in our Canadian Corps, and I think in other Corps too. These modern technical things were springing up in all sorts of directions. A lot of them, of course, were pretty futile when it came to the actual test of fire but, nonetheless, ideas are pretty precious things and it's wise to have people who are flexible to try them out as long as you have people who are equally firm to profit by the realities of experience and to eliminate the things which do not contribute effectively to the purpose of war which is the defeat of the enemy.

MORRISEY, T.S.:
13th

Andy, with his knowledge of electricity, put a lot of little things that look like beehives along the front all connected with wires to a central plotting office, and then when a gun boomed the shock hit all these things at the same time and they were able to pinpoint the exact position, the range, and direction that noise came from.

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:
Artillery

The sound of a gun starts off as the centre of a pressure wave which more or less travels out radially and by getting the direction of arrival of that you can also lay a line down on the map that you can produce back and, with that, the intersection. Those came in and were recorded on an oscillograph film. They were taken off and the time measurements were made,

(CONT)

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:
(cont)

correction for the velocity of sound under the temperature and humidity conditions at the moment were made and all sorts of things and, if you do the mathematics of it, you can't get the position of the source of sound but you get the direction of it so you get two or three posts and you get intersections through and if they're all going through more or less the same area, maybe ten or fifteen yards in diameter, you know you've got a pretty good location. It was in a high degree of perfection by the Fall of '17.

NARRATOR:

Many of the technical advances were made possible by the experiments of a group of scientists, attached to the forces in France to assist the work of the soldiers

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:
Artillery

These fellows in the sound ranging were young scientist that were whistled up from the Universities of the whole British Empire. They were the most cosmopolitan lot you ever could wish for. There was an eagerness to display their wares and to get somebody who'd take the trouble to apply them. To the bulk of the Army the idea of depending upon a photograph of the vibrations of an oscillograph string in order to tell you where the enemy guns were was just treason, literally treason. When these fellows would come and ask for help from the ordinary people who didn't understand the possibilities of the technique, they were invited to shove off and they had no real quarters. They had no dugouts, nobody to look after them. Well the first thing I did with these fellows, we got them looked after, physically looked after and then we began to demand the information from them and we made darn good and certain they knew we were using the information, and it didn't take long until they all wanted to be with us. So, that was one of the reasons why this counter-battery intelligence organization of ours became so useful. We got a chance in the winter of '16 - '17 to do our thinking and to coordinate and to work it all out. Everybody was experimenting.

By the time we got to Vimy Ridge we were in an entirely different position in the application of artillery fire to the support of infantry that we'd ever been before, just as different as chalk is from cheese. By then we had the guns. We had the types of ammunition that we needed and above everything else we'd

(CONT)

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:
(cont)

been encouraged to build up this artillery intelligence information, what I call target information, so that the people who had information knew how to get it in the first place and coordinate it and pass it on in time to be of some use, and I don't think it could have been done earlier, as far as we were concerned. We didn't know enough, any of us, until we'd been through the blood and mud bath of the Somme.

Simultaneously with all this activity going on in the field, you had the Air Force that were beginning to learn how to take photographs and to get experts on who could interpret them. There's no use sending a photograph to anybody just as it is. You could look at it till the cows come home. You got to put a fellow on who knows how to interpret it, identify what he sees.

NARRATOR:

Initially, observation balloons were used to provide aerial observation, but the Germans finally developed means of shooting these down in flames and the artillery were forced to rely more and more on the Air Force.

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:
Artillery

The first artillery observation of any consequence of locating positions of enemy batteries and whether they were firing or not was developed on the Somme. There's an officer here in Ottawa, Leach, who was then a subaltern in the First Canadian Heavy Battery who participated in some of those early developments.

LEACH, R.J.:
Artillery Corps

There was a squadron allotted to each Corps which primarily did artillery work. The cooperation between the Artillery and the Air Force from then on was very, very close. For instance, on the Somme, we had a pilot up for us every day two or three times. There were the two systems, one system was the fellow went up to see what he could find, the other was a pre-arranged shoot that he went up to take on something that you couldn't see from the ground. He observed our fire, to say where the shell fell. Well then you plotted that on your map and then made the necessary correction from that and it worked extremely well. We got that from him by wireless. You see, wireless was a completely new thing. The Air Force had some wireless sets but they didn't have the operators. Well we happened to have one professional wireless operator and one Bell

(CONT)

LEACH, R.J.:(CONT)

Telephone man who was a ham and we were given the first set on the British front. The wireless was straight key and we couldn't communicate with him except by pre-arranged ground strips. We didn't have two-way wireless, except for special things.

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:
Artillery

With this network of observation posts, sound ranging posts, flash spotter posts, balloon reports and the Air Force reports all feeding into my office, we then proceeded as a matter of course to make that kind of information available to Corps Headquarters at once, without any delay, to keep the General Staff informed of everything that was going on in the front and a good many times they've told me at Corps Headquarters that in battle we provided the bulk of the information of tactical importance that reached Corps and Army on our front, the bulk of it.

CRERAR, H.D.G.:
Artillery

McNaughton's methods were so admired that I think every Corps, both British and French, visited the Canadian Corps to see how he was accomplishing these very fine results in country-battery work.

NARRATOR:

If the artillery made great strides forward, the machine gun Corps was marching right beside them. Under the direction of General Brutinel, a French citizen who had been living in Canada at the outbreak of the war, the Canadian machine gunners formed a remarkable organization.

LOGAN, H.:
M.G. Corps

In his whole philosophy of the Machine Gun Corps, I think there were about three ideas dominant in his mind. One of them was the basic position of infantry in any war. As he said, they had to get the position and hold it and therefore the second idea was that regarding the machine guns, their whole purpose in their work would be the support of infantry and enabling infantry to gain positions and to hold them. The third point and the one which General Brutinel laid so much stress upon in the formation of his Corps was the place of the soldier, and here he said you must have fire power in the hands of resolute, well-trained men, and I think for that reason he insisted on calling his Corps the Corps d'Elite.

BRUTINEL, Raymond:
M.G. Corps

The Canadian Machine Gun Corps illustrated what I think was the great characteristic of the Canadian Forces in the field, namely the intelligence, self-reliance and co-operative spirit, devotion to duty of the large majority of individual soldiers. They could not be transformed into mere robots, and remained manly men regardless of rank and employment.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

Brutinel had that rare combination of being a thinker and a man of action. I've always had him down as what I would call an unconventional thinker but a conventional man of action. There are many people who are unconventional thinkers who never get anything done because they are too radical. People do not understand it. He was a man who could think things out carefully and a man who could then translate his thoughts into action, and I think that is something that is very rare in a soldier. Most Generals that you are going to fight, if you can learn how they win their first battle you'll know how they are going to fight their last battle - always the same. Brutinel was a man who could change his techniques to meet the circumstances that were there. He also had an enormous appreciation of mechanical power. The predominant thought in the dogma of most of the military leaders of that time was that the rifle and the bayonet, the sword and the lance, they were the dominant weapon. Brutinel realized the machine gun could take the place of men.

Officers like Currie, McNaughton and Brutinel and Morrison and others recognized that firepower had to be mastered and then employed to economize manpower, and that the infantry could be used for something else than cannon-fodder.

RUSSENHOLT, E.:
44th

Up till that time we had forgotten one of the first principles of war, which is to economize on your manpower and still concentrate your fire-power. We got very skilfull at being able to hold a very broad front with a few men.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

It was very difficult to infiltrate through a Canadian Division because we not only had the front line, we had machine guns all around in depth as well. I talked to many Germans after the war when I was up in the German Army of Occupation, talked to many men who fought against us, and they always said, "God deliver us from fighting these Canadians. Their defence was unbreakable." And it was the machine gun that did the thing. And the gun artillery. McNaughton and Brutinel, I consider, are the two great men.

MOOREHOUSE, Walter:
M.G. Corps

These heavy machine guns, as they called them, were used from an emplacement and they could be used just like artillery. You can place a machine gun just as well as you can place an ordinary gun, say to land on a target at fifteen hundred yards so, in most of the later actions we used to put batteries of guns behind the line where the men were going to go over the top and we'd fire on an area so as to hold the enemy down in that area for a certain time and then, at a certain time, we'd raise our sights and fire farther.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

In the early days of the war the machine gun was looked upon as purely a defensive weapon and a direct-fire weapon. In other words, you had to see your target before you could be effective. So, working on the same principle of the fixed mount, they would fire on fixed lines so, whether they saw the enemy or not, the bullets were there and they could break up an attack. Then Brutinel went one further on that. He said, "These guns are now only defensive weapons. They should be some way used offensively." He developed not only the machine gun as a defensive weapon - both night and day - but also an offensive weapon, and it was a very important factor in the great battles we fought, and I can say that a lot of our successes were due to the fact that the enemies were stabilized in their immediate support to the front line.

Every position has a reserve for the immediate counter-attack. That is the soul of defense, the counter-attack, because at the time the attackers take their position they are pretty well disorganized and that is the moment when they'll be thrown back. Now Brutinel's system, which was very effective, was to keep that fire down just behind the front, back of the second, the third line, and that sort of thing, so that these reserves, to carry out the immediate counter-attack, were invariably broken up. It was continuous fire. We would fire thousands and thousands of rounds and it kept people from coming, and that was the important point.

NARRATOR:

The supreme example of General Brutinel's technique was the employment of the machine guns in the successful Canadian assault on Vimy Ridge in April, 1917, and as he himself recalls his fellow citizens in the French forces were among the first to learn by his example.

BRUTINEL, Raymond:
M.G. Corps

The capture of Vimy Ridge was of the first importance to the French General Staff, and before the day the Chief of the French Staff paid a long visit to the Canadian Corps. When shown the machine gun plans he said, "Well, this is new. It looks interesting and I request that we should be informed of the results obtained." After he had left Sir Julian Byng sent for me and said, "Brutinel you will have to make a full report on the machine guns immediately after the attack for the benefit of our French friends." My answer to that request was that a report from me would be of very little value; that the report should be made by the Germans themselves as they and they alone could give first-hand information on the subject from the business end of it. It was then decided that a set of questions would be asked by the Intelligence Officers, questioning the prisoners in the cages as they came in. The answers to the questions would then be sent to the French Army without delay. And this plan was followed to the letter. The prisoners testified unanimously on the following points: Because of the density of the indirect machine gun fire, by night it was difficult to repair the trenches knocked down by day by the artillery fire. The bringing in of supplies by night was hampered greatly. The evacuation of wounded was increasingly difficult and almost impossible during the last nights before the attack. When the attack started the intense machine gun fire made it impossible to man the parapets.

The questionnaires were sent without comment to the French General Staff. The French Army asked that I should be sent to Chalons-sur-Marne to give a series of lectures on the employment of the machine guns as we conceived it in the Canadian Corps. I went and General Fayolle was delighted, so he said to Gramont Despard: "Well, we must have another proof of the possibilities of this. We have a position which we have taken and lost several times. You arrange to capture it without the help of any artillery, just with machine gun fire, and then we'll see what happens." And that was arranged, and the attack was very successful, so that the French Army was convinced. They immediately then started Machine Gun Schools.

NARRATOR:

In the days of his first experiments many soldiers had questioned the feasibility of directing machine gun fire so close to the infantry forces.

LOGAN, H.:
M.G. Corps

One of the first uses of that was at the Battle of Loos in September '15 and the British were attacking and he offered to give enfilade fire on the flank in order to keep the German fire down from the British troops that were attacking, and to do this he had to fire over the heads of the British troops. He made out his fire tables and sent them up to Canadian Headquarters and the up to the British Army and eventually his fire table came back and on the bottom of it was written a note, "What have you done to account for the fact that the first bullet always falls low?" And General Brutinel was so annoyed with this he just wrote across the bottom, "I always extract the first cartridge from the belt." I always thought that was a fine example of General Brutinel's sense of humour.

NARRATOR:

Among his earliest innovations was the creation of a mobile machine gun force which operated from armoured cars. He created his first unit while the First Canadian Division was being organized at Valcartier.

In the early years of the war his motor machine guns were not often able to take advantage of their mobility but when the German forces broke through in the Spring of 1918 their virtues were made very clear.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

After the March retreat he formed the Second Motor Machine Guns, and he formed the Brutinel Brigade, and the basis of a mobile force which would be able to stabilize any great advance that the Germans might make and he could move to any part of the front within a matter of a few hours. Then when we started to turn on the offensive a few weeks later he turned right around almost immediately and reconstructed this force which was designed for rear-guard action by bringing other arms into it like artillery, cyclists, engineers, so we could then assume our role in the offensive which was in a sense an advance guard role. Then we used that force at the Battle of Amiens where it could be used very effectively. We used it a second time on the Drocourt-Queant Line, again across the Canal du Nord, at the Cambrai Battle. Then he changed again

(CONT)

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
(cont)

and broke us into small combat groups - small battle groups to go off working with each Division. The idea was that we move forward, probe out for any hole that might be in the line and then, as soon as you find a hole in the front, to go like all-get-out until you are stopped again or you may get anywhere from two or three, or five to six, ten miles ahead of the infantry. Now there's an old saying that you can't teach a soldier anything, except in defeat. When he is defeated he'll learn. Well, Brutinel was not that way. Brutinel did not have to be defeated before he learned his lesson.

There is no question that the Canadians' Machine Gun Corps led the way as far as machine gun employment was concerned and I think that that was recognized by the British fighting man. You'd see them come over where the Canadians were and compare notes and oftentimes they came over to find out how we were doing things.

NARRATOR:

With all these advances in techniques and organization reinforcing the unquenchable morale of their Canadian forces the Corps was almost unique by the Spring of 1918.

ODLUM, V.W.:
11th Inf.Bgde.

It was the outstanding Corps of the Allies on the Western Front at the close of the War. I think there was a spirit of pride in the Canadian Corps that did not exist in other Corps.

McARTHUR, D.C.:
Artillery

And this was no figment of the imagination. It was a very real thing. I don't think it ever passed through the minds of most of the Canadians that they could be beaten in any reasonable kind of engagement. This permeated the whole Corps.

ODLUM, V.W.:
11th Inf.Bgde.

Given a task where death may be the daily pay, the spirit in the army to me is the greatest thing. I have differed with other commanders on that score. They talk of the efficiency of equipment. I admit that equipment is necessary, but I am all for the man with the poor equipment and the good spirit rather than a man with the poor spirit. The spirit is the one great driving force. Man is effective. The machine is not.

STEVENS, G.R.:
PPCLI

Falling in fours and moving off mile after mile, hour after hour, across the plain, shoulder to shoulder, knee to knee, they marched together. They got a feeling of integration which never left them.

McARTHUR, D.C.:
Artillery

I kept a diary in those days. I might read a little bit from it as a comment on this: "I have seen more unselfishness, more charity in France than most people would believe possible. Men do not judge one another by their speech, opinions, education and clothes. Even faces are misleading. Affectation and bluffing, self-righteousness and hypocrisy have a rough passage. They wear off mighty soon as a rule. A dozen men, all disagreeing in their ideas, their ambitions, their desires, must live together perforce. They cannot sever relationship and form a dislike on such trifling grounds as we so often used to do. Very likely they will go out together on the same dangerous job and come back perhaps to share the same blankets. If ever men were brothers they are here. They get on together far better than a great many blood brothers do. This is no sloppy sentimentality."

Well, those were sentiments written when I was a boy of twenty. I have probably become a bit more cynical since.

SIVERTZ, Gus.:
2 CMR

The comradeship cannot be duplicated under any other circumstances than the circumstances of war. If it could be extended into civilian life it would revolutionize everything in our world today.

NARRATOR:

Next week Chapter 12 of "FLANDERS' FIELDS" titled "WAR IN THE AIR."

ANNOUNCER:

The first-person accounts of WORLD WAR I were re-searched, arranged and edited under the direction of Frank Lalor.

The series, originated by A. E. Powley, is written, narrated and produced by J. Frank Willis.

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen: "FLANDERS' FIELDS", Chapter 12, "WAR IN THE AIR".

MONTAGE: The average life of a pilot then was three weeks.... After all we didn't think very much, we were just kids, weren't we? We didn't think..... At the very start there was no fighting because there were no guns..... The machine was put together with what we called baling wire..... It was rather frightening over the German lines as a fighter pilot..... Holy jumpin' you were scared, you never got over it.... My jaws would be aching just from gritting my teeth.... We only had one control and that was the foot throttle.... It was by guess or by God, so to speak.... In the early stages it was primitive, very primitive....

NARRATOR: These are the voices of men, no longer young, recalling the days of their youth when, in the skies over Flanders' Fields they were among the first to step, unwittingly, upon the path that leads to mankind's greatest adventure - - - the conquest of space.

When war came to the world in that August night of 1914, and Sir Edward Grey saw the lights going out all over Europe, just 1,988 days had passed since J.A.D. McCurdy lifted off the ice at Baddeck, Cape Breton, and flew the Silver Dart for more than half a mile; the first flight in Canada. But in that short space of five years this country had not been in the mainstream of aviation development. No aircraft were being built here; no flying training schools existed.

(CONT)

NARRATOR: (CONT)

Although Canada was, eventually, to set a remarkable record for the quantity and quality of her pilots to make their contributions in all branches of the flying services, it was not until May of 1915 that a start was made.

At that time "Curtis Aeroplanes and Motors Ltd." of Hammondsport, N. Y. began the commercial production of flying machines at their factory on Strachan Avenue, Toronto, under the management of the same J.A.D. McCurdy and, coincidentally, opened flying schools; at Long Branch, for land planes and at Hanlan's Point, across Toronto Harbour, for flying boats.

Raymond Collishaw, CBE, DSO and Bar, DSC., DFC, Croix de Guerre, who was to become the greatest fighter in the Royal Naval Air Service and Canada's #2 Ace, remembers how it all began.

COLLISHAW, Raymond:
R.N.A.S.

At the outset of the war it was thought by Canadians generally that the war couldn't possibly last beyond Christmas, and naturally the young men of Canada wanted to get over there and do something in the short time there seemed available. Well the war wasn't over at Christmas, and the military aviation, which had been rather despised before the war, had proved its merit in France and the British Commander of the Army, Sir John French, recommended that the military aviation should be much increased as the war progressed into 1915. And the Admiralty, not to be outdone by the Army, prepared a plan for greatly increasing the Royal Naval Air Service.

NARRATOR:

Both the R.F.C. and the R.N.A.S. would take young Canadians who had qualified themselves, at their own expense, and could show an aero club certificate.

(CONT)

NARRATOR: (CONT)

Wing Commander, Robert Leckie, CB, DSO, DSC, DFC, who would gain renown as the zeppelin killer, was among the first to qualify.

LECKIE, Robert:
R.N.A.S.

In the latter end of 1914, and the beginning of 1915, the British Admiralty sent a mission to Canada to recruit suitable material for the Royal Naval Air Service. I appeared before the selecting officer and was tentatively selected. We were simply told that if we obtained our pilot's license or our aero club certificate as it was called then, that they would accept us provisionally. We were to be Chief Petty Officers. I didn't care what I was so long as I was flying and in the Navy. Actually we didn't know nearly enough to be Chief Petty Officers so they had to commission us. So in the end we were commissioned as Probationary Flight Sub-lieutenants.

NARRATOR:

As did the foot-soldiers, the Cavalry, and Artillery-men, the fliers came from every corner of the country. Major Donald MacLaren, for example, came out from Keg River Prairie in the Peace River country to shoot down 48 German aeroplanes, 6 enemy balloons and place sixth among all the thousands of British pilots; fourth among Canadians.

MacLAREN, Donald:
R.A.F.,

Well, to start with, I had no interest whatsoever in aeroplanes. I had only seen one once, and that was at Hastings Park when Billy Stark flew one into the corral fence there. But my brother and I were in the north, down north, I was working for the Topographic surveys so I read about this thing in the Flying Corps, and right away there were two angles to that. One was that you got trained right away at Toronto, you learned to fly and you became a Second Lieutenant, you know, you were a gold-plated Second Lieutenant, and the second thing was, which was perhaps most important, that a girl that I was very fond of was studying music down

(CONT)

MacLAREN, Donald:(cont)

there, so putting all those pieces together I applied for the Royal Flying Corps, found myself accepted, and went down there. Well, learning to fly in those days it wasn't a hard thing. It was, those aircraft were good, good training aeroplanes, Jennies, they called them, J.N. Fours with Curtis ninety horsepower, and the instructors were all old country people.

NARRATOR:

Captain Mel. Alexander caught the fever watching those early Jennies buzzing around Toronto.

ALEXANDER, Mel:
R.N.A.S.

The enthusiasm was very strong among all the young fellas. You just got it in your blood and that was it. But I first had an idea of going in the artillery until such time as they started flying around Toronto.

NARRATOR:

Captain C.M. Geale was among the first ten to do that flying.

GEALE, C.M.:
R.N.A.S.

Yes, I am one of the ten in that first class to qualify as a Pilot in Canada. It was the standard as set by the Federation Aeronautic International which just meant taking two tests, taking the plane up by yourself and flying it for several figure-eights, and then landing within a certain distance of a certain mark on the ground. As far as I remember that was the qualification, that's all. There was no examination or anything.

LECKIE, Robert:
R.N.A.S.

The training was rather fantastic, looking back on it. It consisted of a couple of very elementary and very decrepit flying boats operating from Hanlan's Point, off Toronto, and there we attended from dawn to dusk and squeezed in such flying as we could get. I am still strongly of the opinion that the flying boat is the only machine for a gentleman to fly.

REDPATH, R.:
R.N.A.S.

On account of the slow progress being made in training in Canada at that time under the Curtis School they merely asked you which service you wished to join.

COLLISHAW, Raymond:
R.N.A.S.

In 1914, the British Government recommended that the Canadian Government should finance and organize an Air Arm, to be attached to the Canadian Army in France. But the Canadian Government declined. Later a Naval Mission appeared in Canada and moved throughout Canada from coast to coast calling upon people to produce their sons and send them off to join the Royal Navy. Each candidate to join the Royal Naval Air Service had to pay for his own tuition, his flying tuition, and to pay all his expenses while he was under instruction. There was only one flying training school in Canada at that time, at Toronto, the Curtis Flying Training School, and they could only handle perhaps one tenth of the young men who wanted to go off to the war. The result was that the 400 young men in Toronto were very angry and frustrated. Most of them had given up their jobs, they had no income, and for months they were hanging around Toronto trying to find some way of overcoming this difficulty of getting to the war without any flying training.

LECKIE, Robert:
R.N.A.S.

With the boys, some of them I say, literally starving, we sent a committee to Ottawa to see what could be done. The committee, I don't know why, went to see Sam Hughes, the late Sam Hughes, who was then Minister of Militia and Defence, and his reception was quite amusing. He listened to what they had to say and then said, "Now, my boys, look here, what is this flying all about? You say it's for reconnaissance. If I go on reconnaissance what do I do? I leave my horse and I climb a tree, and I see what I can see. Now forget about this flying, it's an invention of the devil to steal away our best young men. Join the army.

They weren't very happy about that and went across the street to see Admiral Kingsmill. He took a much more logical viewpoint to it and he said, "Look here, we can't train you here, we're not going to set up a training organization in Ottawa, I can't pay you allowances because you are not attached to any unit at all at the moment. What I'll do is this. The first two batches of 12 of you will go overseas right away, one week's interval between each batch. The remainder of you will go to H.M.C.S. Niobe in Halifax Harbour. You will be taken on the books as ordinary seamen and you will spend your waiting time scrubbing decks. But at least you'll be fed and found sleeping accommodatic Do you accept or do you refuse? One hundred percent acceptance. So I was fortunate in being in the second batch so I didn't have to scrub decks. I went overseas right away and finished my training at Chinkwood, north of London. The others came over in due course.

COLLISHAW, Raymond:
R.N.A.S.

And finally the mass of Pilots were permitted to join the Naval Air Service without having had any previous flying instruction.

LECKIE, Robert:
R.N.A.S.

We were absorbed into the Imperial organization and became part of the Imperial organization. A very large part, I may say, because when the war ended the proportion of Canadian Pilots was very high.

NARRATOR:

By the time MacLaren joined the class he was getting to be an old fella.

MacLAREN, D.R.:
R.A.F./R.F.C.

Well, I was a little older of course than most of the young fellows who were joining up. I was 24. I'd been in McGill three years and I should have stayed till I finished that but decided I might do that after I came home if I did come home. I was 24 when I joined. We started to do our flying training, and first of all you went through the school of military aeronautics which was in the University of Toronto and we were billeted in East Residence which is still there. It's a students living quarters, very nice building, and after we got through that School of Military Aeronautics I've got some of the old books around here. The things that we used to write into the "How to drop bombs." Well they told us about everything except throwing them over the side by hand, you know, and we'd never seen a bomb and the machine gun instruction, it was all ground instruction the same as they gave machine gunners on the ground, stoppages, and pull this and push that, you know. It was all good stuff too, but had very little application to the job which you were up against once you got to go over the line. There was no such a thing as training you how to fight. Of course fighting, as scout fighting, only developed in the middle of 1916.

NARRATOR:

There was by now, mid-'15, one other flying school in Canada - - - the Aero Club of British Columbia. More praiseworthy than practical it was entirely dependent on the personal know-how of one man, William M. (Billy) Stark and his lone single seater Curtis bi-plane.

(CONT)

NARRATOR:(CONT)

Vancouver's pioneer airman had learned to fly in 1912 at the Curtis School in San Diego. The summer of '15 found Stark back in Vancouver meeting with a number of local businessmen and forming a flying school to train young pilots. \$2500.00 was raised by public subscription to purchase the Stark Bi-plane and Billy was retained as instructor at \$25.00 per week. The pupils paid \$200.00 each to help defray expenses. Major M.A. Seymour was a member of the first class.

SEYMOUR, M.A.:
R.A.F./R.F.C.

Everything was minimal in those days. I landed in France for instance with 19 hours and 50 minutes solo and I had more than a good many. That's a ridiculous figure when you come to think of it. I could sail a boat. I had done a lot of sailing on the Pacific coast, I could ride a horse and both those things were supposed to be excellent training or experience for being a pilot. Well I'm going back, you know, a way back to 1915 when flying was in its infancy and the opinion of the English was that those who could sail a boat because of the handling of the tiller and judgment of speed and wind direction and so forth, would probably make good pilots, and the horse for the same reason. A sense of balance and also judgment of speed and so forth.

NARRATOR:

If horsemanship really helped, Lt. George Wakeman was halfway there. He left the Northwest Mounted to join. He found things getting pretty academic in Toronto.

WAKEMAN, George:
R.F.C.

I came down to Toronto after my discharge from the Northwest Mounted Police and went through the usual school of aeronautics course. It was an academic course on the basic subjects of Aeronautics. They had an aeroplane strip for instruction on rigging in Hart House at that time. It was a Curtis J.N. Four. Well it was

(CONT)

WAKEMAN, George:(cont) about the most popular training plane in Canada. There might have been some others but at that stage there were not very many aeroplanes built here in America. This was designed by Curtis, Glen Curtis, as a matter of fact, but it was manufactured by the Canadian Aviation Limited, here in Canada.

NARRATOR: Meanwhile out on Lulu Island Pilots were learning their job in a single seater.

SEYMOUR, M.A.:
R.A.F./R.F.C.

Well, there were 12 of us and we each put in \$200.00 and bought the late Billy Stark's three-wheeled under-carriage Curtis Pusher, which he had done exhibition flying on, and he sold it to us and agreed to teach us to learn to fly solo. And solo instruction consists of learning to taxi along the ground and we only had one control and that was the foot throttle and we each had a wooden plug with our initials on it which he would stick underneath the foot throttle and as we got a little more and more proficient he would take a slice off with his pen knife and we'd get a little more power until finally we got to the point where we pulled the stick up into our tummy and we would come up about four feet or so and then gradually settle down. At that time we were on the Mineral Race Track, now Brick House Race Track, on Lulu Island. Well that was one of the methods of teaching flying in those days and that's the way I learned to fly.

NARRATOR: And some went abroad to finishing school.

ALEXANDER, Mel:
R.N.A.S.

By the end of 1915 Curtis School was filled, Wright Brothers had opened a school in Dayton, and it was filled. Well I went down and signed up with the Stinson School in San Antonio, Texas. I went down there and learned to fly on a model B Wright, an old pusher where we sat on like you sit on a bob-sleigh, with your feet hanging out, looking down. It was a pusher type of machine, the propellers were behind. In those days the engines in front. It was called the tractor. There was the tractor and the pusher. And the machine was put together with what we call baling wire, just fabric doped, cotton fabric or linen fabric, and the

(CONT)

ALEXANDER, Mel.:(cont) wooden wings, we used to make them right down there. If we'd break a wing we'd have to make the things ourselves there, and it was by guess and by God, so to speak, whether you were going to be safe or not. They didn't know anything. No one knew anything. Very primitive and you'd call it crude, but we didn't know anything better. I got down to San Antone the first week of February and I took my ticket on the 23rd of March, and I did exactly 210 minutes before I flew my test. 3 hours and 30 minutes before I flew my test for the Federation ticket. You just sat in the seat beside the instructor and he told you, here take a hold of the controls and go to it. You didn't have any training as to the technical side. He didn't know anything more than you did as far as that goes. As a matter of fact, my instructor was Eddie Stinson which today the Stinson aircraft is called after. And Eddie Stinson had only got his ticket a month or so before he was training me, and a dozen others of us. We paid \$1.00 a minute, I might tell you, for this training. \$1.00 a minute. The minimum was \$250.00. You see they made money out of me. I did it in 210 minutes.

NARRATOR:

Despite the Sam Hughes preference for doing reconnaissance from treetops, by the end of 1916 the Government had been convinced that aviation was to be an important factor in the total war effort and established airdromes at Camp Borden, Long Branch, Leaside, Armour Heights, Rathburn and Mohawk, with a school of aerial gunnery at Beamsville. In addition, college men in aeronautic courses were given Government assistance to finish their courses with practical flying at Pensacola, Florida.

With the United States in the war as of April 16th, 1917, the migrations south to better weather became large-scale.

WAKEMAN, George:
R.F.C.

Well, about the end of December a draft of probably a hundred or more cadets who had completed the ground course at University went down by train to Fort Worth, Texas. The Royal Flying Corps representing the British Government. They had come to an agreement for the Royal Flying Corps to take over what the Americans call the Tallie O'Farrell Fields at Fort Worth. There were three aerodromes involved. Denbrook, Evermont, and Hicks Field. They were very large aerodromes for there at the time. I would think there was possibly 15 hangars on each field and part of the property area would be something like 300 acres. The R.F.C. took those camps over and in return for that they had an understanding that they would train a certain number of American Army and Naval Cadets.

NARRATOR:

But already hundreds had gone to the battle. Not since the high and far off times when Knighthood was in flower and the individual chose his personal quest did warriors enjoy such freedom of action.

MacLAREN, D. R.:
R.A.F.

About the 8th of August I think it was we sailed in the "Metagama" and then we were all commissioned by that time as Second Lieutenants, Royal Flying Corps, given a lecture by the Adjutant. One of the things he said, he says, "I want you to remember, he says, "when you go over there that you are not to make a show of yourselves." He said, "You will notice that the tailors sell fancy gold leaf and gold braided wings. I want you to refrain from decorating and festooning yourselves with such garish things and stick to the plain ordinary wings and people will have more respect for you and so on." Which was alright until I ran across a fellow that had a rank of a Colonel in London who had more of the garish stuff on than anyone else I had ever seen. However away we went till we sailed in the "Metagama" from Montreal, docked at Liverpool and then we were to London and we were up before the Air Board, and he gave us a lecture. I forget his name now. He asked us then, of course, which we wanted to do. He said, now some of you want to go into two-seaters which might mean anything - artillery observation, camera work, -- others of you want to go into fighters or scouts as they called them. Now I want

(CONT)

MacLAREN, D.R.:(cont) you to tell us what you'd like to do. So I said I want to go into scouts. That was a very brave thing to say in those days because people were telling you right and left, well a scout pilot he only lasts five months. They get shot down right and left. Well I couldn't see this because I had been talking to some other fellows and they said, "Well, no, I think the scout pilots got as good a chance, he can fight or leave it alone as he likes anyway. He's running his own show. A two-seater fellow has to do as he is told. He's sent on a patrol and on artillery observation or something else or photographing. He has to do that. Or a bombing job. He has to go and do that. And he just can't pick and choose as he likes", so that we were scout pilots.

NARRATOR:

Mel. Alexander, who had qualified himself in the United States, ended up in bombers.

ALEXANDER, Mel.:
R.N.A.S.

From the time I got back to Toronto till I got on the boat in New York I wasn't more than about a week at the most, five or six days. They gave us our tickets and \$50.00 in our pocket and that was it. And went across to England. Well then we were posted to H.M.S. "Excellent". From then on the Navy, but they ran the flying boats, they protected the whole coast of England right up to the North Sea. They had stations all the way up to the north of Scotland, and they did submarine patrols out there and they were out there all the time and then down on the south coast and actually over in Ireland too, they were functioning. But then we had, they also had about a dozen squadrons in France and that's why I was with the squadron in France and strangely enough being in the Naval Air Service as long as I was I never flew a seaplane or flying boat. I was always on land machines. I went down to what was known as number three wing down at Luxoyia in the south of France near the corner of the Swiss frontier and that was known as No. 3 Wing, the all-Canadian Wing. That was the Wing that did the first raid in the world's history. Yes, an all-Canadian Wing under the Naval Air Service.

COLLISHAW, Raymond:
R.N.A.S.

These young men had no idea what they were going to do in the flying game. They knew it was going to be war-like but they didn't know what they were going to do. But when the majority of the Canadians in the Naval

(CONT)

COLLISHAW, Raymond:
(cont)

Air Service emerged from their flying training schools they found themselves posted to a completely new wing conceived by the British Government to carry out reprisals against the homeland of Germany for the zeppelin attacks on Great Britain. This was the first conception ever in the history of aviation of a strategical air striking force against another country's main cities and main military objectives in the homeland. This wing was sent, quite properly, to the border of France that was the closest to Germany. These single seater bombers were known as Sopwith one and a half strutters. They carried a thousand pounds of bombs and were guarded on their tails by two-seater fighters. The result was that only minor casualties occurred to that bombing force as a result of reactions from the enemy defences.

DODDS, Robert:
R.A.F.

I think maybe one of the toughest fights we had we were sent over to sort of act as bait over Gestel Aerdrome to bring the enemy aircraft up so our fellows with the single seaters and so forth would go over and shoot them down, I suppose. So we went over to Gestel Aerdrome and we got there and I think all the enemy aircraft were in the air. We got mixed up with about twenty-some odd. And we had a pretty rough time. The formation got, shot two or three down but we were pretty badly shot up too. We done a lot of shooting but I can't, I couldn't say that I could claim any because there were so many enemy aircraft around and so much action that you just couldn't stop to see what happened. You were just lucky to get out alive and get back across the line again. There were only six and when you run into over twenty enemy aircraft you haven't got much time to look around to see what happened.

McEWEN, C.M.:
R.F.C.

You had no idea really how nimble you had to be and how you had to push the aircraft around and manoeuvre them roughly to get out of trouble but you soon learned, I tell you that, boy. My first fight I don't think I'd been in the thing for two minutes before a chap got on my tail and started firing at me. You had to get right down to business and keep going or you were a gonner. The average life of a pilot then was three weeks. He had to learn quickly that this was damn serious business he was in and shake himself up if he wanted to stay. And the other poor fellows they just got shot down before they knew where they were. You couldn't learn that as far as I could see rough handling of the aircraft because these

(CONT)

McEWEN, C.M.:(cont) instructors didn't tell you about this. They didn't know. They hadn't been overseas, and they couldn't sort of put you fully wise to it, but you had to handle the machine very nimbly and very roughly to hold your own.

NARRATOR: The fine techniques of aerial fighting were most often self-taught. Lt. A. W. Curtis scared himself as an instructor.

CURTIS, A.W.:
R.N.A.S.

I was on my way to France from Dover and I thought I was going to be a fighter pilot I should know something about aerobatics so I stuck my nose down and pulled the stick back and went over on my back in a loop and hung upside down for some distance and fell into the harness and my seat fell out from under me, and I wondered what was wrong first, I couldn't -- then I realized I hadn't pulled the stick back far enough. As soon as I got on my back I eased the stick and I floated along upside down and so that frightened me a bit. It isn't nice flying over the sea in a land machine and I then climbed up to seven thousand feet and got over a bit of forest there and then I stuck the stick nose down and pulled her back tight and looped seven times before I stopped so that I would know how to loop. The next thing was we were, I was in France and I hadn't learned how to spin, and I was flying outside tail-end Charlie on the left-hand side of the formation of five of "V" formation and in the turn it was such a tight turn that I kept throttling back and holding up to try and hold my position and eventually I went into a spin. Well it took me two thousand feet to find how to get out of it. I pulled the stick back and spun more tightly and then I pushed the stick forward and gradually came out of it. It was rather frightening to have your first spin over the German lines as a Fighter Pilot.

NARRATOR: The job of scout or fighter pilot didn't exist a year before. The number of aircraft and their duties had increased enormously and in ratio to the spreading conflict on the ground. Inevitably the airmen, ours and theirs, began shooting at each other; at first with pistols and fowling-pieces.

GRANGE, E.R.:
R.N.A.S./R.F.C.

See, in the earliest days, at the very start, there was no fighting because there were no guns. I remember the first time I was sent up in Dunkirk on offensive work I had an old machine. Being a new pilot and not being considered worth mentioning hardly, I was given an old machine and for armament it had a double-barrelled shotgun tied on to the fuselage. Well if it had been fired, why it would have blown the tail off, so it wasn't fired. It was a very hopeless type of armament.

GEALE, C.M.:
R.N.A.S

There was no special training at that time. When I was on at Dover or Dunkirk they didn't even have machine guns on the planes. They just started about that time, November, December, 1915, the first time they ever put any kind of a gun on a plane, so what you were doing mostly was spotting. A Lewis gun was the first one they put on the top plane and then later, of course, they had the interrupter gear which shot right straight through the propeller between the propeller blades synchronized interrupter gear.

NARRATOR:

Superiority in the air was a very fluid thing and changed from day to day. It was judged by simple means.

GRANGE, E.R.:
R.N.A.S/R.F.C.

Certain machines have certain jobs to do, and they have to be protected from the air. For instance, suppose it's a photographic machine -- that machine has to be protected while they're going to try and shoot it down. All the anti-aircraft will bear on that machine. The fighters on the opposing side will try and shoot that machine down because they don't want those photographs to get back, so that the fighters of our force have to try and protect that machine. Now, if they can shoot down the protection or shoot down the machine itself why then you would say that they have the superiority. I suppose it's very much the same way that if they appear on your side of the lines you think that possibly you're not as good as you thought you were.

NARRATOR: The men who flew artillery observation and reconnaissance never made the headlines but one fighter pilot describes them as "A great race of people".

CARROLL, E.H.:
R.N.A.S.

We went out on a time factor. We might do two or even three patrols a day. Or we might do say a dawn patrol, or in other words, we would leave maybe a half an hour before dawn to take off to get into Germany before the sun came up. Or after we would go in to protect the long distance reconnaissance machines, or even fighter patrol and destroy the enemy. Clean them out so they wouldn't be attacking our artillery ob. machines, the R.E. Eight's that were doing the artillery observation. See, they were sweeping and they were the greatest fellows in the war, really. They had more gumption than a lot of us put together. They were a great race of people.

NARRATOR: And the bombers, #3 Wing, "the Canadian Wing", was making history down south near the Swiss border.

ALEXANDER, Mel.:
R.N.A.S.

The #3 Wing. The idea was to raid the Saar Valley, the center of the iron works of Germany, you see, and we had our principal aerodrome down at Luxoyia down near Belfort in the south just in the corner where France and Switzerland adjoin. I don't know how it originated but they just got a lot of Canadians in it and the fellows wanted to go there. They heard about this Canadian Wing and we wanted to be with our own friends and it got to be known as the Canadian Wing and it was, so I know there was about forty. Forty Canadians. The raids were supposed to be on military targets or the coal mines of the Saar Valley. That was the idea. But on the night of the 29th, 30th, or 31st of March 1917, the Germans sank the hospital ship ASTURIAS in the English Channel and that brought on a retaliatory raid and No. 3 Wing were elected to do the job, so on April 14th, No. 3 Wing attacked the town of Freiberg, an open town with bombs and that, to my knowledge, I am sure is the first raid on a town in the history of the world, so we had the job to do it.

(CONT)

ALEXANDER, Mel.: (cont) And it was a retaliatory raid for the sinking of this hospital ship. You dropped pamphlets. We took the pamphlets, I was in with the fighters at the back of the flight, and the bombers, we'd drop the pamphlets and the bombers dropped the bombs. That is the first raid, to my knowledge, in the history of the world. There were lots of raids on military targets. I mean in the R.F.C. up in the north they were attacking artillery dumps and one thing and another, but deliberate attempt to retaliate for an illegal act of warfare. We were just told to go and raid that town and drop the bombs and kill as many as we could. That was the sum and substance of it.

NARRATOR:

But with the onset of the Somme offensive the R.N.A.S. dispersed their #3 Wing to go to the assistance of the hard-pressed R.F.C., the first step toward the formation of the R.A.F.

COLLISHAW, Raymond:
R.N.A.S.

In the Somme Battle of 1916 the Royal Flying Corps were hit heavily by the German air service. As a result the War Office appealed to the Admiralty for assistance in the air. In consequence the Admiralty decided to wash out #3 Wing, the strategical bombing force against Germany, and to organize naval fighter squadrons that should be sent to work under the operational control of the Army at the front. And early in 1917 Naval squadrons began to be formed and sent to the Army and in that way some 14 squadrons were eventually organized and sent to fight with the Royal Flying Corps. I was one of the first to go from #3 Wing, as I'd been a fighter there flying a fighter aircraft. When we arrived on the Somme we worked just as the Royal Flying Corps squadron did working with the Army, the big aircraft doing the reconnaissance. Our job was simply protecting them. We were on their tails guarding these reconnaissance aircraft. It was one of the most frustrating experiences I've ever had because the task of the fighters was to protect the tails of the reconnaissance aircraft. Now the fighters only had offensive weapons leading to the front. They were fixed to the aircraft and nothing was protecting their tails. The main objective of the whole operation was to bring the reconnaissance aircraft back safely.

(CONT)

COLLISHAW, Raymond:
(cont)

The enemy aircraft knew this so all they had to do was to get on to the tails of the fighters who were at the rear of the reconnaissance aircraft and attack them and bring them down. If any of our fighters turned to engage the enemy which he had to do in order to bring his guns to bear, the whole performance of reconnaissance aircraft and fighter aircraft of his own party deserted him, abandoned him, and left him to his fate. What do you do? Whether to suffer as best you could the attack on your tail or turn about and defend yourself. Each was equally disastrous as far as I could see.

NARRATOR:

Others of the R.N.A.S. were flying anti-submarine patrols, doing naval reconnaissance and intercepting zeppelin raids. Wing Commander Leckie was one in flying boats out of Great Yarmouth.

LECKIE, Robert:
R.N.A.S.

I was employed very largely on anti-zeppelin duties. Great Yarmouth, the base at which I was stationed, was the nearest part of England to Germany and was the converging point for the zeppelin attacks on England, hence our station was employed very often in screening and actual attacking of the zeppelins. I think I had about twelve contacts with them altogether. The flights overseas were just as vital to the Admiralty as the flights on land were to the Army. I should perhaps explain that these anti-zeppelin patrols on which I was employed were not only designed to attack and drag back the zeppelins, but they were reconnaissance patrols and during these flights I was watching all the time for units of the enemy fleet and frequently reported them. Fights were not so common although they did occur once or twice in the North Sea by virtue of the fact that both the Royal Naval Air Service and the German Air Service were working at extreme limits of their patrol endurance when they did meet. We had some, we had some proper dog fights but not many, it was more reconnaissance and anti-zeppelin and anti-submarine attacks upon which we were engaged.

NARRATOR:

1917 was the bad year for fliers. It was bad over the salient. Bad over Messines Ridge and Passchendaele. It was worse down south over the Somme. The superior German aircraft and the high degree of combat skill attained by enemy fliers was a constant drain on our aerial resources. But the tide turned that year.

ALEXANDER, Mel.:
R.N.A.S.

Things were getting so bad down on the South that they supplemented the R.F.C. Squadron with Naval squadrons and we went down to that Ypres front and you're damn right we were down there in that dirty front, and when things were right at their worst. Well then, as I said, things were getting so bad, you see, the Hun --- this is my own personal opinion, the Hun machines were better than ours. They had been more aggressive and more progressive in bringing out better machines quicker than we did. And they had been making it pretty rough for the R.F.C. and they were losing terrifically down on the Somme, down in the south area. Well then we're getting into '17, you see, in the first Somme battle, well the Germans had come up with an Albatross Scout. Prior to that it was the Halberstadt. They were good machines and they were, we still were out there with these old B 2E's and 2 C's and they were just shooting them down like flies. That's when Sopwith came out first of all with his Pup, the Sopwith Pup, and he followed it up with the Tri-plane. I was on the Tri-plane, and he followed it up with the Camel, but until that time the R.F.C. were confined to these machines built by the Royal Aircraft factory which the shareholders were, too many of them, Generals in the R.F.C. They may not like that. They had us all beaten until they started to come out with better machines. Well then they wakened up and then the Nieuport came out with a fairly good machine and then the Spad and then the Royal Aircraft factory came out with the SE-5 and the Bristol Fighters and they started to get good machines but up till that time they were really making it hot for us. Now we were sent down to this place called Drogland. We were right behind Ypres. It started on June 6th when they blew up Messines Ridge and it culminated in the capture of Passchendaele. Well for four months there we went through in our

(CONT)

ALEXANDER, Mel.:(cont)

squadron, we went through, our complement was 15 pilots and we went through 62 pilots. Most of them were either killed or missing, and some of them were wounded and others, it was just too much for them. They left the squadron. Well I went through that whole darn show, and I was there from the day it started. And that was it, but during that period the fighting was just terrific. The fighting in the air was terrific and they never got anywhere. And in five months, what did they advance, about four or five miles and the mud was just terrific. How in the world that thing ever went, how we didn't lose everything, I don't know, but to me it was a darn disgrace. We used to send pilots out unnecessarily you know. We were fighting offensive patrol, we had to go across the lines. Well if anything goes wrong and you are on your side of the line you can get down. But if anything goes wrong on the other fellow's side you're a prisoner, if you don't get killed. That's about the size of it. And that was what was happening, and these Huns they had all their squadrons, these Albatross scouts, and they had some good pilots and I've always maintained that was where the supremacy of the air was fought in 1917. In 1917 we fought it out for the supremacy of the air and the Germans had it up till say February or March, and it just took us till September to subdue them and it cost us an awful lot of pilots and machines.

NARRATOR:

It was then that Raymond Collishaw fought Richtofen to a stand-off.

COLLISHAW, Raymond:
R.N.A.S.

At that time the Richtofen Flying Circus hadn't been formed, but Richtofen's eleventh pursuit unit was active on the Messines front and at that particular period of war they were our main contestants and the struggle for air superiority over the Messines Ridge I look upon as one of the most bitter and hard-fought periods of the war. It was just about that time in the war, that is to say June 1917, when the Allies realized that their manufacturing output and their output of flying training schools and factories was far superior to the German conditions. This meant that the loss of aircraft and pilots meant nothing to us because we had plenty of replacements. So that the air war entered a new phase. On our side we were prepared to go on with a war of attrition and the Germans very reluctantly had to follow suit.

NARRATOR:

"The Dawn Patrol", that romantic-sounding exercise so beloved of later movie makers was, actually, the bane of every pilot's existence. Not one flier with whom we talked could see any real strategic value in being an early riser. Why dawn?

ALEXANDER, Mel.:
R.N.A.S.

I couldn't tell you why. Early morning you are pretty tired, you know. And by the time the afternoon comes you have had one patrol and you want to lie down and you go back. If you were to go in a mess around two or three in the afternoon on the average the fellows were all sleeping or lying down, it was pretty tiring. This is something that I have often thought about. Talk about being tired. You would think getting up and flying in a machine isn't too hard work, with one thing and another. I've come back from a patrol that it - I might just as well have been carrying a ton of lead for two hours, you're so tired. Now it's the tension. Personally I used to grit my teeth so, so tightly when I was under the tension that my jaws would be sore just from gritting my teeth. That's a funny thing isn't it? The big time was between ten and twelve in the morning and from five to seven at night, then the whole squadron was out en masse. You would go out for three or three flights and you could see all the other squadrons in the area out, and the Huns were up just as thick and those were when the big battles started.

COLLISHAW, Raymond:
R.N.A.S.

From the R.F.C. Fighter Squadron's point of view who had the Naval Squadrons with them, one of the most difficult things they had to cope with phsycologically was the dawn patrol. For some mysterious reason Headquarters Royal Flying Corps in France looked upon the dawn patrol as an historic and proper thing to do for the fighter squadrons at the front. These dawn patrols were officially offensive patrols and young men having had an evening out required to fly off at day-break and feel offensive is quite unnatural. The result was, I think it was fairly said, that very little material results emerged out of the historic dawn patrols. That applied to both sides. Incidentally I may say here that I know that the Richtofen Circus took very little interest in the war till about 9.00 o'clock in the morning.

LECKIE, Robert:
R.N.A.S.

I have never yet met the man at the Admiralty who ordered the patrols. I'd like to have met him and would like to meet him now, because he apparently only had one time in his mind, and that was dawn. And at night I would receive a signal, a flying boat from Great Yarmouth will leave base at dawn. Whoever he was didn't realize that to leave a station at dawn meant two hours work ahead of dawn, getting the boat ready, crew together and assembled, briefed and the boat launched and off. I never yet found out why it was necessary to send a patrol always at dawn. Any other hour it seemed to me would have done just as well. Strategically it would have made very little difference. The zeppelins patrolled for quite frequently two days at a time, two days and two nights. However, I have seen many dawns as a result.

NARRATOR:

Bad enough for the land-based planes -- but a North Sea patrol before sunrise was something unforgettable.

LECKIE, Robert:
R.N.A.S.

More often than not the patrol would be carried out in the most filthy weather I have ever flown in. The North Sea, it was full of fog and rain most of the time. A good day was a rarity. We at least learnt how to fly in clouds without the aid of cloud flying instruments. I still look back on it and wonder just how we did it, but it is a fact that I have flown for eight hours at a time with no cloud flying instruments at all, no turn indicators, only a spirit level and an air speed indicator. If a zeppelin was sighted, of course our orders were to attack it. The speed of the later models of the zeppelin were just about the same as the flying boats, but they could of course outclimb us hopelessly. Once they sighted us our chance of successful encounter were practically nil.

NARRATOR:

But there were occasions when the cloud and mists and fog worked for you -- and against the enemy. As in the case of zeppelin L.22.

LECKIE, Robert:
R.N.A.S.

L-22 was patrolling a comparatively low altitude on the edge of the bite of Heligoland and we had been sent out on a dawn patrol as usual but the L-22 was silhouetted against the rising sun and the light in the east, and made our approach toward the zeppelin fairly

(CONT)

LECKIE, Robert:(cont) easy, in fact it was the only time I ever had a margin of height on a zeppelin. This time I had to lose height, and I think we took them completely by surprise. I doubt very much if they even saw us until the attack. We attacked them from above. I had lots of height and ample speed and came up very close to them, about twenty feet beneath them, and our front gunner poured the contents of two guns into them and set her on fire. A thing of exquisite beauty. I never did see a zeppelin in the air without being thrilled by the sheer beauty of the ship. It was a thing to marvel at, the exquisite beauty of it. On the two occasions that I was fortunate or successful in my attacks instead of a feeling of exultation I felt a feeling of horror that I had destroyed such a beautiful thing.

NARRATOR: The L-70 was successfully attacked at night to make a funeral pyre for Captain Peter Strasser, Commander-in-Chief of the German Zeppelin Service.

LECKIE, Robert:
R.N.A.S.

In the attack on L-70 I was a gunner, or a gun layer, on that occasion with my friend of chocolate fame, Egbert Cadbury, and we were in a DH-4. We attacked L-70 at night at a height of 17,000 feet and shot her down. Unbelievable fire, three quarters of a million cubic feet of gas going up simultaneously lights the sky at night for ten miles around. We knew them. We knew them through our Intelligence and, incidentally the Naval Intelligence system of that day was magnificent, something that I think is not probably fully realized. The Germans had nothing but the greatest of admiration for it. We knew when certain zeppelins were raiding certain areas, and we heard when new zeppelins were launched. We knew about the L-70 class. It was the first of three that were to be built and that one was commanded by Captain Peter Strasser, the Commander-in-Chief of the German Zeppelin Service. He perished in L-70 the night we attacked.

NARRATOR: While Leckie knew his adversary by name, it was not the same thing for the fighter pilot.

COLLISHAW, Raymond:
R.N.A.S.

The fighter pilot never thought of the man in the machine. He didn't see him, he thought of the enemy aircraft simply as a target, as a kind of game which he had to assault and bring it down while like jousting, in the olden days of bringing a man down out of the saddle.

MacLAREN, D.R.:
R.A.F.

Let's put it this way. If there was no such a thing as a newspaper man there'd be no Knights of the Sky. I don't believe there was such a thing. We were out there to shoot the other fellow down. You didn't have any personal sense about it, you looked at an aeroplane or enemy aircraft. You had no sense there was a person in that thing. It was the aeroplane you were after, the machine.

NARRATOR:

The great test in the air came with the launching of the German offensive, 21st March, 1918. This was the all-out attack as the might of Germany rose up to hazard all in one last throw. As the Canadian machine guns were to stop them on the ground, the Canadian fliers played their full part in stopping them in the air -- even the dread Red Baron and his Flying Circus.

MacLAREN, D.R.:
R.A.F.

We'd get a bulletin from the Intelligence people about the big show that was going to come in March, that the Huns were going to make a full front attack to try to get through to Abbeyville to start with. And it was going to be on the 21st of March, 10.00 o'clock in the morning, and everybody lampooning the "unintelligent corps" as we used to call them. You know we thought these boys were all tea-cup readers anyway, but, by George, a week before that date we were all assembled by the Wing Headquarters people to look at some photographs that our people had taken and they said the Intelligence fellows was telling us this and he said there you are now. There's the concentrations that are happening and on the 21st of March they'll start right there. Well on the 21st of March that's

(CONT)

MacLAREN, D.R.:(cont) where they did start, but once the March show started it was a different story. They were conserving all their aircraft and training up to that day and they were doing all that during that winter. Of course the Richtofen squadron, as you know, had been down at Italy all winter on the Austrian front. Yes, they were not in France November, December, January, but his Circus, as they called it, was all back full force in March and they were really on the ball, those fellows. They really were.

WAKEMAN, George:
R.F.C.

In 1918 tactics of fighting had changed from attacking from by flights. The Germans would start to use full squadrons, 30 aeroplanes and no matter how good you were you could become a casualty. An illustration of that would be in 43 Squadron. Two of the most outstanding Flight Commanders in any of the squadrons. One chap was named Woolett and the other was named Trollop, and they had both shot down six enemy aircraft in one day. Now in August of '18 Trollop and his whole flight was shot down one afternoon.

COLLISHAW, Raymond:
R.N.A.S.

Richtofen was a much maligned man in the Royal Flying Corps during the war. He has never been given credit for his vastly superior standard of leadership and guidance, spiritual guidance, which he had and possessed and applied. The Royal Flying Corps always thought of him as a "star turn" individually but enough literature has now been published for us to know that he was also a great leader and an exalted man in many ways. All those who served in the Richtofen Circus still have an annual meeting at which they commemorate Richtofen's services and Richtofen, at the present minute, is still a national hero of the new Germany. At the present minute every man now knows what a great fellow Richtofen was.

MacLAREN, D.R.:
R.A.F.

I've forgotten just when he was killed, but you see it was on the Somme, the Valley of the Somme, where that happened. For we would be at Peronne, Bucinni or Carpi, or somewhere in there about that time. We were seeing that Circus almost every day. Red Fokkers up in the evenings, late a night. Late in the evenings you'd suddenly run across three or four of them.

CURTIS, A.W.:
R.N.A.S.

A friend of mine, Roy Brown, shot Richtofen down. Brown and I were trained together. Richtofen was always easily spotted because he had a red machine and he'd sit on the outside of the dogfight and wait until someone started to go home or someone was hurt and then he'd pounce on him and finish him off. That's what he was doing at the end of the war anyway, and that's when Brown got him. Wop May, who was a Canadian from the West, a bush pilot, was a new boy in the squadron and he decided that he'd better get out and look and see what it was all about, and Richtofen pounced on him and Brown saw Richtofen coming and Brown jumped Richtofen and shot him down from the back, put a bullet through his back that went down through the seat. The seat is up in the Military Institute now.

COLLISHAW, Raymond:
R.N.A.S.

The present Baron Richtofen wrote a letter and mentioned to me that the family, the Richtofen family, were quite certain that Roy Brown, the Canadian, had shot down Baron Richtofen because the Doctors had found out that the bullets had entered his body from above rather than from below, which would have been the case had machine gun bullets from the ground brought about his end. Well Roy Brown was a Canadian from Carlton Place in the Royal Naval Air Service. He'd been with us for a long time and he had passed his prime as a pilot and he was in a nervous state and the Doctors had recommended that he should be sent home for a rest and, on this day in April 1918, he was leading his flight and he saw a red aeroplane, which we now know to be Richtofen's, attacking an Army Cooperation aircraft, so he dived down to rescue this English aircraft from the clutches of the red aeroplane, and in doing so he fired at the red aircraft and down went the Red Baron, so-called. Well at the same moment when the Canadian, Brown, opened fire, the Australians opened fire from the ground and, to this day, there is a controversy all over the world, did the Canadian aviator Brown bring him down or did the Australian machine gunners bring him down. But, having had this letter from the present Baron Richtofen, there is now no doubt that what brought the famous Richtofen down were the guns from the aircraft attack from above because the bullets coming from above had to come from an airplane.

NARRATOR:

As the memory will never fade of that skilled adversary riding the sky in his scarlet Fokker neither do the passing years diminish a man's recall of the gallant comrades he flew with over France and Flanders - - -

CURTIS, A.W.
R.N.A.S.

I knew Bishop personally then and I knew one or two of the others, but we knew of them because it was really a small organization and in the Naval Air Service we knew almost all the pilots who were in France. There were only about six or eight squadrons there and we knew them all. Raymond Collishaw was one of the best morale builders that any service ever had. He was, come on boys, let's go, let's at them. And, at night in the mess, he would be enthusiastic and full of beans. He would inspire confidence and tell you how easy it was to shoot down a German, and that sort of thing. It really wasn't that easy but to listen to Colly talk you'd think it was no problem at all. (That was when I was a very young fellow). I didn't ever serve in France with Bishop but I knew him in England and I knew him after the war very well. A very modest man he was, and a very marvellous man.

NARRATOR:

While the name Manfred Von Richtofen lives on -- a hero of the new Germany -- let us not forget Billy Bishop.

It has been said that we, as a nation, lack heroes. This is not so. We simply lack a respect for our past to a degree that blinds us to the recognition of those heroes that we have.

Not to exalt the achievements or the courage of those who flew above those who served the common cause on land and sea it is, nonetheless, a fact that when William Avery Bishop attended at Buckingham Palace to receive the highest award for valor in the power of the Sovereign to bestow, the Victoria Cross, he had already won the Military Cross and the Distinguished Service Order. His Majesty, King George the Fifth, remarked on this. At the investiture he told the young Canadian that this was the first time he had

(CONT)

NARRATOR:(CONT)

been able to give all three decorations to one man.

Behind the medals and the record of 72 of the enemy shot down, there lived a very human, very lovable young man. Major Donald MacLaren remembers his old comrade with great affection.

MacLAREN, D.R.:
R.F.C.

Oh yes! Yes! I knew Billy Bishop very well. If you have ever heard people say good things about Billy Bishop believe every one of them. Don't discount anything that they tell you good about Billy. Billy did an awful lot of good for people. I knew his character well, and a lovable character. He was a kind man, no doubt about that. To me there is nothing that anyone could say but good about Billy Bishop. He did inspire an awful lot of young people.

As Canada's leading Air Ace, if you want to use that lousy term, with the biggest record, and the Victoria Cross of course, Billy was lionized when he came home to Canada, but I think behind all this with Billy, every time I would see him when I'd go down east Billy was full of the need for educating the public to support aviation in Canada. He wrote articles that are not forgotten any longer. Some of them are brought up today, and many of your young Flying Officers who joined the R.C.A.F. have read these speeches in their early days, so he didn't waste his time. Every time that anyone asked him to make a speech about aviation he was always there and he always gave you something good. Although he wasn't practising flying any more he always gave them something good, so let's remember Billy that way.

NARRATOR:

Next week "FLANDERS' FIELDS", Chapter 13, "THE GERMAN DRIVE". The Western front explodes in violence as the enemy launches his last, great, all-out offensive.

ANNOUNCER:

The first-person accounts of WORLD WAR I were researched, arranged and edited under the direction of Frank Lalor.

The series, originated by A. E. Powley, is written narrated, and produced by J. Frank Willis.

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen: "FLANDERS' FIELDS", Chapter 13, "THE GERMAN DRIVE".

NARRATOR: As early as the Spring of 1917 the British Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, had been formulating a bold plan to use motorized armour to clear the way for a massive cavalry assault against Cambrai.

Not only was it a tactical innovation to employ tanks as wire-cutters but a maximum of surprise would be achieved by having the Artillery forgo the usual ranging and registration and shoot by the map when laying down their preparatory barrage.

At first all went as planned, and Trooper A.G. Jacobs saw such a picture unfold as the eye of man shall never see again.

JACOBS, A.G.:
LSHG

I had been told off as dispatch rider to Major-General McAndrews and I saw the attack at Cambrai from Divisional Headquarters on Old Man Hill. We were up there and we saw the whole thing like a picture. We saw the very very short preparatory barrage. We saw it like moving lights forward. It was still dark. We saw it creep forward. We saw it move on and then it got light. We got word that our Infantry were successful and then we saw these tanks go out. Each tank went out dropping a tape behind it. Anywhere that the old lumbering tank went two cavalymen could ride. The wire was pushed right into the ground. See, wire is the horses biggest enemy. It tears the flesh. Of course our Generals never realized that it tore the flesh of men too, so they sent infantry soldiers against it but, of course, they didn't cost as much as horses. Sitting up there we saw these

(CONT)

JACOBS, A.G.:(cont)

tanks creep out and the next thing we saw was these serpents of horses. They were moving out behind them. To the rear of that we could see the Indian Cavalry as the sun came up. It was a nice day. All the native regiments were Lancers. We could see the light on their lance points. That was the picture we saw and the next thing I knew we were going flat out across country and we went straight into what had been the German front line for advance Div. Headquarters, and our Brigade, the Canadian Brigade, was leading the Division and they were in and gone. The Garries broke through, made a gallant attack on a battery. Jock Strong got his V.C. The cavalry soldier who was in that attack was absolutely convinced that we could have gone through into the open. I am still convinced.

NARRATOR:

But the cavalry were held up at the Canal in Masnières. It seems the Germans had blown all but one of the bridges.

COX, S.J.:

Fort Garry Horse

General Seeley was in command at that time, and I was o his Headquarters. That morning there was a delay getting over, you see. This thing should have been happening early in the morning, but there was a delay in getting over. They were strong, the other fellows were stronger than we thought they were, and with the result that we died down. But in the morning Seeley told me to go and find out what was happening in the village about being held up.

MARLOW, H.A.:

LSHG

In that attack there was five Divisions of Cavalry. We was in the Fifth Cavalry Division at the time and there was six Divisions of French Cavalry, and I think it was four hundred tanks. The Infantry, of course, swept across first and when we got pretty near Masnières that's there the Canal was, see. They called for patrol for to go down and see if the Bridge was alright.

COX, S.J.:

Fort Garry Horse

There was one bridge left in the village of Masnières. All the other bridges apparently along the Canal had been blown up. So I got all the information from the units on what was happening, and I galloped back to Headquarters and gave them all verbal information on

(CONT)

COX, S.J.:(cont)

what was happening. In the meantime one of our tanks had tried to go through and over this bridge and the bridge collapsed and the tank was down in this river, and the last bridge was gone.

MARLOW, H.A.:
LSHG

But apparently the Fort Garry Horse - I think it was "B" Squadron - got a place across on the locks of this here Canal and crossed over, see, and got away out in the loose, see.

COX, S.J.:
Fort Garry Horse

When the squadron had gone, before any of the other squadrons had gone, the whole movement was cancelled. They figured the element of surprise was gone and it was too late to push this thing through, and there was this squadron away in the blue.

In the meantime that threw the whole thing out, and we pulled into the Village of Masnières, and we waited there. I think they considered definitely that they were gone.

HAIG, R.F.:
Fort Garry Horse

Well we knew that they had gone and we didn't, frankly, in talking to my other officers, we didn't think they had much chance of coming back.

COX, S.J.:
Fort Garry Horse

I mean after all, 150 men that had gone into German territory and what can you expect. You didn't expect them to come back miles through the thing themselves.

NARRATOR:

No! One would not expect it, but that is exactly what happened.

Shortly after crossing the Canal, Captain Duncan Campbell, Commanding "B" Squadron, was killed by machine gun fire from a sugar factory. Responsibility of leadership passed to the second in command, Lt. Marcus Strachan.

They charged a battery of German Light Artillery, killing the gunners and knocking out their field

(CONT)

NARRATOR: (CONT)

pieces.

From there they fought their way four miles eastward, behind the German lines where, finding they were not being followed by other members of their own cavalry, they determined to fight their way back again.

By subtlety and stealth as well as vigorous hand-to-hand fighting at enemy strong points they did, indeed, come back into their own lines.

Strachan's heroic leadership; skilfull and imaginative action, won him the Victoria Cross.

The adventure of "B" Squadron, Fort Garry Horse, served notice that fighting could be done in the open - that determined men, led by tanks and cavalry, could break out of the trenches; could, perhaps, sustain a swiftly moving, widely ranging, offensive.

HAIG, R.H.:
Fort Garry Horse

I would like to make a comment on that show because it was proved later that they at that time didn't know, let's put it bluntly, they didn't know how to use cavalry in conjunction with infantry. We didn't start to move up until quite late. In other words, we hung back until the infantry had reached their objective. As a result we had to ride a good many miles before we got up to a place where we could go through the infantry. And it was in November and you know how dark it gets in November, and you can't do much in that kind of an operation after the light goes, it is very difficult.

NARRATOR:

The results of the Battle of Cambrai were inconclusive but a new pattern had been set here for modern warfare.

As the great war entered upon its last winter, persistent rumours of a massive German offensive in the spring became accepted fact supported by our best intelligence.

By late winter the big German push had become a favourite basis for fireside conversations in Britain.

O'NEILL, Joe:
19th

During the winter it was known in England that the Germans were going to put on this attack in the spring. In fact I was on leave somewhere in February, and I'd heard a great deal everywhere in England about the big attack the Germans were going to put on in the spring. Then all that winter while the Canadian Corps was working night and day digging trenches and fortifying Vimy - in fact they even brought over the reserves from England and formed labour battalions to help out - the staff of the Fifth Army was, well they were being good fellows and having a pretty good time and everybody was enjoying life, and they were not fortifying that area.

OLIVER, Doug.:
18th

In the early spring of '18 when it was still in the wind, so to speak, that the Germans were going to make one big last push everybody was jumpy. On March, I think it was March 2nd, 1918, Heinie was feeling out the strength of different fronts. He'd send strong daylight raids across to feel out the temper of the garrison, the Canadian or British garrisons. He'd exploit it maybe for a day if he got any headway and then he'd pull back. All he was doing was he was feeling out, and one of these hit our outfit. It happened to have this company in the line this night and the funny thing was about it that the Colonel came up for the afternoon and had two Americans, a couple of shave-tails, second lieutenants. They were up for instructional purposes. At that time they were

(CONT)

OLIVER, Doug.:(cont) attaching young American officers to different units to give them a little idea, and I was just a lieutenant and I was in command of the Company and I said to the Colonel, "Why don't you let these officers stay here, we're being relieved tonight. We could see that they got out all right." And the Colonel said, "That's allright." And so he got Brigade on the phone and they said it was allright and the boys would come out the next morning. And, just as luck would have it, right up at the head of the stairs in the dugout they had one post, and three German shells came over, whizbangs, and pitched in behind and up went the cry, "Stretcher bearer, stretcher bearer, stretcher bearer" and the result was three men were hauled down the dugout steps and put on the floor and they weren't, none of them, badly wounded but they had to be patched up and this was war. The Americans were seeing war right before their eyes and they loved it.

Well the next morning at four o'clock we were awakened with the doggondest barrage you ever heard in your life. It seemed half of Lievin was falling down. Two runners came over from Battalion Headquarters and said, "Every man be on the alert, there's something going on up front and the whole situation is confusing and push out a patrol and see if you meet any trouble, you see. So we got the patrol away and what was happening was this big German feeling-out raid had been pulled right down and the Germans were through right to the dugout in which the Americans were sleeping. They had not so much as seen war first-hand of those three slightly wounded men, here next morning Germans were right outside that dugout entrance throwing swendigo sticks right down on top of them.

Now I dunno, I think, I imagine they got off all right because there were two entrances to the dugout and the Germans may have missed one but they were right there and the counter-attack platoon, this reserve platoon of the 21st battalion, took the Germans in the flank and drove them back.

NARRATOR:

The Canadians, up to strength, bushy-tailed and full of fight, spent their time out of the line in intensive training — forever improving themselves. General Pope remembers a couple of inspections.

POPE, M.A.:
Engineers

This was in March, early March of '18. We put on a good show but Haig's inspection had to be postponed, something came up that prevented him coming so General Currie came along and took the inspection instead and if he didn't give us a keel-hauling I never know of one. He went through that Brigade like a tornado and just ripped us to pieces. Well, after that treatment, a week later when Haig came along we were pretty good. You could have put a transit down the noses of our fellows and you wouldn't have seen anything and Haig was very impressed.

I remember Haig saying that if the Germans had any reason to think that the whole British Army was as good as our 11th Brigade ~~was~~ that morning, they wouldn't attack. Well, this was about the 10th of March and they attacked on the 21st.

NARRATOR:

With advance knowledge of the German push the most methodical preparations went forward.

STEWART, J.S.:
Artillery

General Haig said that he would be more pleased and satisfied if we would make all our defence in greater depth. We had far too many men and too many guns in the forward area. He would bring everything we had in the way of Lewis guns back to the support line and the batteries should be thinned out down on the plain. The defence was all in depth. We had found out from what had happened down on the Somme the best way to meet the attack. And he suggested that at least half of the guns should be brought up to the top of Vimy Ridge and half of them were up that night. And then it was suggested that positions for a retirement should be selected for all the artillery, which wasn't very difficult because the ground had all been fought over both by the French and ourselves, and they were relics of the old positions of the batteries still existing when we went over the ground.

NARRATOR:

They knew the when and where of the German assault but the weight was uncertain. The artillery prepared three lines for retirement.

STEWART, J.S.:
Artillery

The anxiety came down from Corps. On three days hand-running General Morrison, who had command of all the artillery, came to inspect these positions, and we made very good emplacements for every gun on those three retirement lines. But they were tremendously anxious because they knew the Germans were trying to outflank Vimy Ridge from the south.

O'NEILL, Joe:
19th

Three weeks before the attack was mounted they found out the exact date and the place that the Hun was going to attack. Down south of Vimy was the biggest one. Then the staff started madly to work, to do all these jobs they should have been doing during the winter, and the men were just worked to death. I think that's the only way you can put it. And the result was that when the 21st of March, when the Germans did attack, it was a very foggy day and they were through, and there were many units where the infantry had pulled out and the Germans were clear back to the heavy artillery before they were stopped.

NARRATOR:

When it came the full weight of the assault fell on General Gough's hapless 5th Army to the right of Byng's 3rd Army opposite St. Quentin.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

Well the attack started on the 21st of March, and the Germans employed an element of surprise in the attack. It was not a long preparation of battle beforehand as previously been done, and they also employed the penetration by infiltration. Now they were assisted a good deal by the weather, as it was foggy weather, and lack of visibility helped them a great deal.

ROSS, Alex.:
27th

As a matter of fact I rather think they did have an element of surprise because they attacked over the area which they had systematically destroyed when they retired in 1917. They had gone back from the Somme a long distance back to the Hindenburg Line and in doing so they had destroyed everything in the world that they could destroy on the way. Therefore they were advancing into what was a devastated area.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

One thing they did not have on the 5th Army front, the machine gun defence that we would have on the Canadian front. That is, say the medium machine guns with their cross-fire covering these gaps between the defended locality - the defended localities, I think were good. I think the men in it were reasonably good fighting men, and I think they held their positions until they had to give up but the Germans penetrated through these soft spots, you might say, and infiltrated and got in behind.

PHILPOTT, Elmore:
Artillery

Of course we were getting the news of this terrible break-through, first on one side and then on the other, and the one, especially in the south where the 5th Army was just about wiped out, was really ghastly because the line was absolutely wide open, and some of these little be-monocled Englishmen that you thought you knew were useless for anything, really rose to the occasion and gathered up everybody with a uniform on, it didn't matter a darn who he was, he was a batman, he was an orderly, he was a cook, at the Headquarters he was conscripted into the emergency force and those boys went out and they plugged the gap.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

The 5th Army did not appear to have any adequately trained reserves to counter attack and, of course, they began to penetrate and get in close to the Headquarters of the different formations and you'd first have a Brigade Headquarters withdraw because they were threatened, the next thing a Divisional Headquarters withdraw, and so it would go down the line as one fell back and that would leave the troops of the forward positions completely without any support behind. In other words, food and ammunition supplies would not be forthcoming. They were receiving no orders. Everything was cut and that would bring about a state of confusion and collapse of the army, because I know those men in the forward positions fought on and in many cases fought on very gallantly until they were without ammunition and without food and, consequently, there was nothing else for them to do but surrender.

SHIELDS, T.T.:
PPCLI

Now when the break-through came it was on our right over towards Arras. We were almost directly in front of Lens, and I would say that there was not much panic. As a matter of fact, I would say there was none. You see, an infantryman in the First War in trench warfare he didn't know too much about what was going on around him. You knew your own little area of a hundred yards on each side of you. You knew what was front of you. That was your duty to know what was out in front of you but otherwise you didn't know much, so that I would say there was no panic, there was no uneasiness. The morning that their attack opened the gas alarm went so we had to put on our gas masks and we wore our gas masks for about four hours. We knew that there was a big bombardment going on over on our right but it wasn't until later on that we learned what that bombardment was and the gas that we were getting was the down-wind gas from the German bombardment, you see, from the gas shells they were using.

O'NEILL, Joe:
19th

On the 21st of March the Hun broke through at both the north and the south end of Vimy Ridge. They did not attack Vimy itself for the simple reason that during the winter of '17 - '18 General Currie had fortified Vimy Ridge to the point that it was impossible for the Hun to take it. The Germans didn't bother trying to even fire a shot on Vimy Ridge itself, but concentrated on the north and south.

NARRATOR:

But to stand on Vimy and watch the enemy sweep by on both your flanks was not the happiest of prospects.

ODLUM, V.W.:
11th Inf.Bgde.

Where it first broke that did disturb us to a degree. It was an anxious moment to see them coming, what looked as if they were going to be, behind us.

ROSS, Alex.:
27th

We expected it but we were shocked at the advances they made. They were so spectacular as compared to anything that we had experienced before that we just couldn't understand it.

When you heard of advances of ten or twelve miles a day why it was incredible. That we couldn't understand.

POPE, M.A.:
Engineers

We were on the Lens front. Our Brigade Headquarters were in the mining town of Leivin, about a mile back. We were in deep dugouts and the army situation report used to reach us about four o'clock in the afternoon. I'd get it and I'd roll the maps, showing the whole front on a large scale and I'd hoof it over to Odlum's dugout with the new line, to which we had been pressed back which I'd drawn a moment before, you see, and Odlum used to look at it with great interest. We agreed that the chips were now down and this was it, you see. And about the fifth day Odlum made, I thought, a very gallant remark. He said, "Pope, roll up that map, we'll unroll it when the situation stabilizes."

JACOBS, A.G.:
LSHG

And the Heinies were coming at a pace, you know. I got to Noyon and the Gendarmes had gone through and moved all the people out. I rode down the main street. The stores were just with the doors open. I looked at two stores, a jewelry store and a little grocery place; decided which one I would loot. I took a box of cigars and as many boxes of biscuits as I could take out of the grocery store, and I took nothing from the jewelry store because my horse would have to carry the weight. I'm glad I didn't because all of my little souvenirs that I did have I lost when I got wounded. They were still on my horse.

McARTHUR, D.C.
55th Fd.Bty.
RCA

I suppose that military history would agree that the war came very close to being lost in the early days of 1918. General Currie's famous order of the day was read to the troops. We knew that things must look pretty black, as indeed they did.

NARRATOR:

And General Currie's order of the day was accorded a mixed reception

PHILPOTT, Elmore:
Artillery

And that's when Currie made the famous declaration which our troops never liked because you know they don't like that rhetorical stuff. They hated it. In fact most of our officers, most of our commanders, never read the thing they were supposed to read to the troops because they thought it was baloney and why should they.

(CONT)

PHILPOTT, Elmore:(cont) But he started out "Your mothers will not mourn you, you will fade away into immortality". Well, imagine telling that to the troops. They'd hoot you off the place. So, anyway, we didn't read it but still everybody knew that they were supposed to hold that ridge and that was the whole thing.

NARRATOR: But it made a vastly different and lasting impression on General Raymond Brutinel, soldier of France and Canada; father of the Canadian Motor Machine Guns.

BRUTINEL, Raymond:
M.G. Corps

Of course you have the order of the day. It was time to react, and Sir Arthur reacted. He reacted by an order of the day which, in part, reads as follows:

NARRATOR: "Looking back with pride on the unbroken record of your glorious achievements, asking you to realize that today the fate of the British Empire hangs in the balance, I place my trust in the Canadian Corps, knowing that wherever Canadians are engaged, there can be no giving way. Canadians, in this fateful hour, I command you and I trust you to fight as you have ever fought with all your strength, with all your determination, with all your tranquil courage. On many a hard-fought field of battle you have overcome the enemy, with God's help you shall achieve victory once more".

BRUTINEL, Raymond:
M.G. Corps

Now the effect of that was really too wonderful to be described, and I heard officers and men saying, "Well, alright, now we know what to do and we're going to do it", and they dug trenches here and dug trenches there. Everywhere they went to work full, not of joy, but of determination.

NARRATOR:

At that time, and to beef up more hard-pressed sectors of the Front, the higher echelons of command began drawing off elements of the Canadian Corps from Vimy. -- Andrew McNaughton's Artillery was weakened. He resented it.

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:
Artillery

I was one day in command of the Corps Heavy Artillery on Vimy Ridge and by the nightfall of the next day I had no guns. They'd all been taken away from me, and then Currie --- it looked as if all this front which we'd won, we were going to lose. Not we lose, lose by being drawn off into some other reinforcement of somebody who should look after themselves or, if they couldn't look after themselves, fall back a bit and bring them on against a pivotal position such as this. And it was Currie who represented those conditions.

NARRATOR:

And General Currie resented it - - and resisted it as strongly as he dared.

PANET, E. deB.:
Artillery

He was convinced it was most important to keep the Canadian Corps together as a fighting machine. He had great difficulty in doing so but finally won. Let me give you extracts from the letter he wrote to Lt.Gen. Lawrence, Haig's Chief of the General Staff. Currie set forth clearly and reasonably the desire of the units of the Canadian Corps to fight side by side. A wish shared by the people of Canada. He argued that with one of its Divisions thrown in here and another there the Corps had no chance to do its best. And that's what happened to the Australians. The divisions were all over the place. The letter concluded "From the very nature and constitution of the organization it is impossible for the same liaison to exist in a British Corps, as exists in the Canadian Corps. My staff and myself cannot do as well with the British Corps in this battle as we can do with the Canadian Corps. Nor can any other Corps Staff do as well with the Canadian Division as my own. I know that necessity knows no laws and that the Chief will do what he thinks best, yet for the sake of victory we must win. Get us together as soon as you can." Well that's a wonderful letter, you see, that Currie sent and he won his point.

NARRATOR:

And the Canadians stayed on Vimy. They had made of it an impregnable bastion.

STEWART, J.S.:
Artillery

We had, on the top of Vimy Ridge, not only our own Brigades but also the army field artillery Brigade.

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.
Artillery

We were related to a front. We knew that we could smash things coming against us. It was a bastion in the hands of people who knew about it. It was impregnable. The Germans couldn't have taken it.

FOWLIE, A.:
49th

Ours was the only part on the Western Front that didn't move in those two months. From the Green Crassier on the left the 4th Division were, and we were the 3rd, the 2nd was down at Oppy and the 1st Division was being marshalled up and down the front in trucks waiting to fill in at the last gasp or something like that, but he never tackled us. He tackled the 2nd Division at Oppy one morning, oh, it was a thunderous barrage, but they turned everything we had behind us on to it. Gave him a fearful battering. He didn't try it after that. But we were in for 62 days or something like that.

RUSSENHOLT, E.S.:
44th

During that period the Corps held one-third of the British line and there we developed mobility in machine gun fire power. A great number of three-ton trucks were brought together and machine guns loaded on them so that we could deliver that fire-power at any point along that one-third of the entire British line. Now this, of course, was reinforced with hard cores, that is the dugout that went down the two and three stories and so on, and these were the pivots of this defence. He records the number of miles. I think it's hundreds of miles of barbed wire entanglement that were prepared out in front. And, to me, this means that we, the Canadian Corps, the men who were in at that time, had learned the job and had put up a defence there that in that day was pretty nearly impenetrable. It was almost impregnable I would say. I think the Germans recognized this. They recognized not only the strength of the physical defences but also the spirit of the troops that were behind, and I think this is what diverted the attack to other points on the front.

ORMOND, D.M.:
10th

The Boche was quite aware who was holding it and he deliberately stayed away but the Canadian Corps sort of wired themselves in, you understand, on each side. They were very tired troops and we were fat and full of fight. There was no question that there were no comparable British troops.

RUSSENHOLT, E.S.:
44th

I want to reinforce that idea about the mobility of fire power. We had it not only on the ground with this innovation of three-ton trucks which was entirely new and entirely Canadian. We also had it in the air, and we could of delivered a terrific volume of fire power at any point even if they had broken through. And I think that this was recognized by them. I think it was tremendously important.

The Americans would have called it American inventiveness. But, being modest Canadians, I would say that somebody thank it up.

NARRATOR:

And the somebody who "thank it up" was Brigadier General Raymond Brutinel - - -

BRUTINEL, Raymond:
M.G. Corps

When the Germans broke through the Fifth Army they created a gap between the French and the British Army of about eighty kilometers and the Brigade was sent to try to fill the gap in order to delay the advance of the German troops. Being motorized, they were very quickly on the job. They left Vimy in the morning of the 23rd. Twenty-four hours after they were on the job and they engaged the Germans, who were then advancing very rapidly and from every direction.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

Now as far as the Motors are concerned, they were a mobile machine gun unit. The situation was very confused and very fluid. They were men retiring, men of the 5th Army. You found men there, mixed regiments, you'd find a Brigadier fighting a platoon mixed with Highlanders and riflemen and all sorts of things, and it was a confused battle going on. Now I think the result of the Motors coming up there with their system had a very stabilizing effect for the simple reason

(CONT)

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
(cont)

that the Germans, by this time, were moving in formations. They had passed through the defences, overcome them, and were now forming up and they were coming forward in their proper battle formation. And the methods used by the Motor Machine Guns was very simple, generally speaking. We would take the four guns or eight guns of a battery and open fire as the enemy would be advancing and bring them to a halt. And then the enemy would then get ready to shell us out and the thing was to move half your guns back to a rear position - maybe a thousand yards back, maybe five hundred yards back - and, as the enemy then would come on with their artillery support and they would advance closer, the thing was to pull the forward guns out, and then the battle line would be cleared and the enemy would sort of collect themselves and start moving forward. Then you'd give it to them again. It was day after day - it was the same sort of thing. If things were quiet on one front, and things looked good there, you'd then get into your vehicles and move to some place else.

CHURCHILL, Gordon:
M.M.G.

Haig issued his famous "Our backs are to the wall" order. All the Machine Gunners of the Canadian Corps were taken from near Arras down to Amiens. Our unit was sent into the line there to stem the German advance and our orders were to take up our positions and to fire to the last round and not move, no retreat, last round, last man. That was the only occasion in my war experience when we said goodbye to each other as each crew moved off. We said goodbye and shook hands. We never did it on other occasions but we did then because the order was "No Retreat."

BOLE, A.:
M.M.G.

Your map was the most essential thing that you carried with you at that time to know where you were, and how to get out of this mess and the only way you could get out. His offensive was really terrific. It was his idea I believe to get Amiens and Paris. We then formed what was to become the First and Second Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade under Colonel Walker and Colonel Muir, and the whole independent Corps under Brigadier General Brutinel, but the odds were really overwhelming against us. You used about, I forget how many guns, maybe about 28 or so machine guns and you could hold up an awful lot of people. Mind you we had no pill boxes. It was just a case of straight in the open. You were there, you were a block, you didn't know. Our work was just block, hold and hold, hold

(CONT)

BOLE, A. (cont)

hold every chance you possibly get, throw them in.

They came in pretty solid flanks at times, in groups. If you could get them in cross fire and on a flank firing you were alright, but otherwise it was straight concentrated firing. It was a case of fire as much as you could get off and get out. That was just really what it amounted to.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:

M.G. Corps

And a very interesting thing came out of that fighting that we were doing in the Motors and we were using long-range machine gun fire to bring the enemy to a halt. And when you are doing rear-guard action you must not ever get closely engaged into hand-to-hand fighting. And the main object of a rear-guard is to delay the enemy, and you delay the enemy by bullets and you open fire at long-ranges, 1500 to 2000 yards, and then he is under fire. You know that you are not doing much in the way of execution or killing but it isn't killing, it's holding him up. Then he has to make plans of how he is going to advance and get in between that 1500 yards or so to you. And then at a given point, when he is about 1000 yards or 500 yards away or something like that, then you do get out. Then you do the same thing over again. Well, that is the tactics of holding him at arm's length.

BRUTINEL, Raymond:

M.G. Corps

In March 1918 when the Fifth Army collapsed leaving a very wide gap between the French and the British Army, a gap which had to be filled somehow, then the two Brigades were sent to Villers-Bretonneux, and from there, thanks to their mobility, they were able to cover practically the entire gap in the line.

HAZLITT, T.A.:

M.G. Corps

We left that night and we arrived in Villers-Bretonneux and saw the refugees leaving. There was one sad sight there. Villers-Bretonneux was an awfully pretty little town and we had a truck parked just outside a very nice little house and a plane came over and dropped a couple of bombs just about midnight. An old lady came out of that house with her husband and he was crying and she was bleeding. They just walked out the door and down the street. Just as well they did because the town was smashed all up.

BRUTINEL, Raymond:
M.G. Corps

They had their supplies with them and therefore it was a comparatively easy matter for them to dig themselves in and get all their ammunition and supplies in position. They rendered their invaluable services ... it would be sufficient to say that their services were so striking that they are inserted in the Tower of Peace in Ottawa.

NARRATOR:

In addition to their devastating fire-power, each one of the Motor Machine Gun's three-ton trucks were worth its weight as a morale builder. They served as rallying points for the men of broken battalions.

HAZLITT, T.A.:
M.G. Corps

We had two brigades then and I don't know whether you have ever come across Beurling's famous dispatch from there, "Went into action with ten guns, lost fourteen and carried on with twenty-six", something like that. Beurling was the Commander of our Second Brigade. I think he was a Norwegian. He'd been trained in the Norwegian Army and Brutinel in the French Army. There was no particular love lost between them but they were both marvellous soldiers. Men like Beurling and Walker, in charge of our outfit, they gathered up men and machine guns and manned them and set up strong points and, to a certain extent, the mobility was a factor. There's no doubt that the Motor Machine Gun Brigade did do a terrific job there but it was in such a mess nobody knew where anything was.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

If it hadn't been for the Motor Machine Gun Brigade, if that motor machine gun had not existed there is no doubt in my mind that the Germans would have broken right through and have got to Amiens. I think if they had gotten to Amiens they would have split the French and the British Army, and anything would have happened after that. Now despite anything else that may be said Brutinel's idea of a motor machine gun I believe saved very grave consequences that might have happened. As a matter of fact, of course, I believe that Brutinel's contribution in machine gun tactics had a tremendous effect on the war.

NARRATOR: Not only were the machine guns moving. The 19th Battalion was up and down the front like a shuttlecock.

STITT, F.A.:
19th

We were made into a flying column and we were supposed to be seen and shown at various places where they had received a tremendous assault from German troops to let them know that there were fresh divisions behind them and keep the morale up, and we would have been far better off fighting the battle itself, because that slugging in the forced march and the forced marches that we had to do in the capacity of a flying column, it was terrific. We carried everything we owned on our backs.

However, we finally got attached to Byng's army, the 2nd Army, and Byng was quite proud of that because Byng, as you know, had commanded the Canadian Corps and he had asked for the 2nd Division to be attached to him and his troubles.

NARRATOR: Having made his point with the Chief and having forced a hands-off policy toward the Canadian Corps, General Currie could now afford to be generous - - - He sent General Julian Byng the Second Division to beef up his beset Third Army fighting desperately on the left of the broken 5th to the immediate right of the Vimy bastion.

OLIVER, Doug.:
18th

Everything was complete confusion. They took the First Division back to Vimy because they were so thin on Vimy and the Second Division was left brigaded with the guards until the middle of June, as I recall, away from the Corps, detached from the Corps, and brigaded with the guards, and it was pretty comforting to go in the line with Coldstreamers or the Scots Guards on either side of you.

YOUNGMAN, E.:
19th

We relieved the Guards on the Arras front. The Guards had been in for seventy-two days and they were relieved and we were left in there for ninety-two days and even today you still hear echoes of where some of the men who was in the 2nd Division thought that we got a bit of a raw deal because the other three Canadian Divisions were taking it nice and easy while we were being pounded to bits on that front.

WISE, John:
25th

On the way down, and moving at night, concealed in the woods in the daytime, on the second evening we were halted by some French Gendarmes who could speak fairly good English, and they explained to us that the Guards, the Imperial troops, were ahead of us but they had left a tank full of whisky on the side of the road. This was of great news of course, and the quartermaster was notified and I believe the whisky was salvaged.

SEYMOUR, L.C.:
27th

We marched another seven or eight kilometers and we met a bunch of Imperials coming out singing their heads off. "Is that all that's left of the battalion, boys?" "Hell, that's all that's left of the brigade". There were forty-eight of them altogether.

HOLDER, G.K.K.:
26th

The next morning over, the first thing you know, why there's no barrage from the Germans or anything. Here they were coming there in swarms, expecting to walk right straight through, you see. All of a sudden we put up the SOS and we opened up. Of course all we had was rifles and Lewis guns in those days and the artillery got the SOS and, look here, you talk of a mess of Germans -- and them scattering. They were just blowing them right off the earth, see, and between our rifle fire, and that stopped them, they stopped right there. It was that way all along that front. We weren't the only units.

OLIVER, Doug.:
18th

As a matter of fact it was the fourth morning we were in the line, the front line. A German prisoner gave himself up and he said that the Germans had been rehearsing, they were going to take the Vimy Ridge in the morning. Well you can imagine the wind-up that caused in our outfit because we were in direct line of any attack for Vimy that he would make by the southeast of Arras. Well, he shot -- he started about, oh, I would say about five-thirty in the morning, and he

(CONT)

OLIVER, Doug.:(cont)

fired for four and a half hours, I would say, steady. You could lie on the side of the sunken road with the sun in your favour and you could just see the shells crossing, oh before the sun, just like needles. He shot us all to bits in there.

O'NEILL, Joe:
19th

Oh yes, this was during the time that the Hun just was so peppy, and the aircraft people learned that the Germans were preparing an attack, and they had a Brigade of Infantry and huge ammunition dumps in a village well back of the front line. Well they figured that this distance was the extreme range of a six-inch howitzer. So the officers of the howitzer batteries came up and they laid it all out with tapes on the ground. Well then at night the thing was all worked out, of course. The artillery opened up, the divisional and the corps and everything down there opened up on the German front line and on all the German battery positions, and they were really pounding them. Well in the middle of this, back of the line, they had brought up a number of these great big naval guns, six-inch naval guns, oh the barrels of those things are about 10 or 12 feet long. Everything was done of course in military style, synchronized watches and all that, and right on the dot everything opened up. They fired for one hour and ten minutes on that village, and they put over two thousand rounds, nothing smaller than a six-inch. Well next day when the planes went over and took photographs, there was nothing but a hole in the ground where the village had been, and that busted up the German attack.

OLIVER, Doug.:
18th

One thing that I think deterred the Germans, and it's not because I was a Second Division man, I think the Second Division pulled ninety-two raids that kept them off balance all the time, you see.

One of the first things in any trench warfare you had to realize was the control of No Man's Land. You might be an awfully good trench battalion, trench duty battalion, but if you didn't have control of No Man's Land well the Heinies would be coming over at night and lifting the men out of your trenches without you knowing it. The only way you could control No Man's Land was to constantly have patrols out there prepared to fight, not just observation patrols, but fighting patrols.

ODLUM, V.W.:
11th Inf.Bgde.

Well, the answer of course: First, we had superb confidence in ourselves. No matter how bad it was we would correct that. Secondly, the Canadian Corps did not have to carry any of the load at all. It was out being, as we called it then, fattened up for the next operation, and we went down there and we gathered around the perimeter of that bulge. Had a chance to look at what was going on, to learn what we could, and what we saw, and this gave us a great deal of confidence.

NARRATOR:

The degree of movement and the tempo was increasing. The Motor Machine Guns, the Flying squads, the Cavalry were breaking out in all directions. As presaged in the battle of Cambrai, attritional trench warfare was coming to an end.

POPE, M.A.:
Engineers

About the 28th of March, a week after the big German attack we went out. I presume only two battalions that night, and we went to a place called Mont St. Eloi, not the old St. Eloi of the salient, another one, Mont St. Eloi behind Vimy. When I got up in the morning we seemed to be out in the fields, at least joined our Headquarters in the fields, and Odlum gave me verbal orders to proceed to a certain map location because we were to relieve one of the Brigades that had been attacked, the neighbours on the right. And I always remember the 75th Battalion. I think the whole battalion, lead by Al. Poupore, streaming across the fields as if he were on manoeuvres on the Prairies out at Calgary or Sarcee or something of that sort. It looked like open warfare. They were just going over the land, in dispersed order of course, and that relief was carried out.

NARRATOR:

In front of Amiens the situation had become desperate.

KING, E.A.:
R.C.D.

There is something here that I think the people of Canada ought to know, that the Germans had broken through and their spearhead was for Amiens and the orders the previous day were these. If the Germans take Amiens the British will retire to the Channel

(CONT)

KING, E.A.:(cont)

Ports and the French will retire to Paris. Now there was only one thing between the Amiens and the German spearhead and that was our one Brigade, the Canadian Cavalry Brigade. So General Seeley got in touch with General Waagen of the French Army and told him that he was going to attack on the Hangard Ridge. Waagen said that he wished him luck but he considered the Brigadier mad. Anyway Seeley went forward and got contact with the oncoming Germans at a place called Moreuil. Well he was a man without fear. That is all you could say. He sent word back for the troops to come up and we came up at a canter and he sent his instructions. The Canadian Dragoons were to attack on the outskirts of the Wood, the Strathcona Horse were to go through and clear the Wood. Well that was when we used our swords. But we stopped them. They never got any further and when you come to figure it you can see that that charge changed the whole history of the war.

COLE, J.H.:
R.C.D.

And they had to stop him. Because if he had got to Amiens the war was finished. Because that was the last railhead that they had at that time. General Seeley himself, before they went in, he told that to them. He said, "If Amiens falls we're finished".

KING, E.A.:
R.C.D.

That was when the cavalry really had to do their stuff. The Infantry had broken. Guns by the thousand had been captured. There was nothing to hold the advance back and we had to fight the rearguard action to prevent it getting into a rout.

The whole action was a series of detachments sent out here and there to hold up any place where it was, the line, was breaking badly. And we lost men right left and centre there.

ELKINS, W.H.P.:
RCHG

But actually we had a very great advantage in that show because we'd been trained in open warfare. That was the way all our training was done, you see. We had these light guns and very well trained men in moving warfare, and we were able to stay up some time after the field guns had to retire more slowly and then get away so that I think we were very useful that way.

BRODERICK, G.:
LSHG

And with this rearguard action they wouldn't allow you to hold. That wasn't the point, they wouldn't allow you to hold. Oh it was wicked you know, when you knew darned well that you had them dead to rights and they'd keep coming at you and all you had to do was see the boys whittling them down. The machine gunners would wait and Fritzies, where he would have a chance maybe of an open spot, they'd come down through there in big long lines goose-stepping. You could actually ---- It was wonderful, they would come down in there and at a certain time the machine gunners would get the order and they'd go brrrrrr and they would just go down like mown wheat, out of a wheat field. And that would take care of that wave.

Then it wouldn't be very long until another wave would form up again and come back at you the same way, and that was the sort of action that was taken right from La Fère right back until we hit - well - Moreuil Woods.

NARRATOR:

Moreuil Wood was different. No goose-stepping columns here. The grey mist hung heavy in the Wood and out of it the myriad grey shapes crept forward.

COX, S.J.:
Fort Garry Horse

You wouldn't see them until they were practically on top of you. And they were pretty strong, pretty vigorous and full of pep. And with the result that you didn't have much warning and maybe around noon or 11.00 o'clock or something it would clear but up to that time they were able to infiltrate right through this fog. And it made it very very difficult.

BRODERICK, G.:
LSHG

As the line grew - that is the bulge in the line grew - our line naturally grew longer. That is the original line was that much longer. And what the mounted troops were mostly used for was sometimes Fritzies would make a thrust and he'd break through. There were just hordes of them just thrown in, you know. They had no mercy whatsoever and they'd open up that point in the line again, then the Cavalry would be dispatched there to take infantry action, so to speak, or whatever was necessary to get those lines connected up again. To stop them there and get the

(CONT)

BRODERICK, G.:(cont) line in one continuous line, you see, then possibly away across kilometers some place else ... the same thing would happen and that's where we would have to go again.

MacKAY, D.R.:
LSHG

That was a hard job on them men you know, because we were still running around from place to place. They didn't know where he was going to attack next. You might stay here a day, you might stay here two hours, and you was off again. And these men hadn't been riding, you know -- and that was a pretty hard job on them men.

WARREN, J.A.:
LSHG

The Germans were throwing quite a force at us and, as far as we knew, there was nothing left of the Fifth Army, which was a broken up army. We met them walking back down the road. "Where's your guns, fellows?" "They've all gone, mate, they've all gone. That's all we got." (LAUGH)

COLE, J.H.:
R.C.D.

Well, he come through with practically a new army, the Germans did, because when we got back we could look up the road and we could see him coming down the road marching just as though they were on Church parade. So the band playing for them, I don't know if it was a band, but it looked like one of them. But there they were coming down the road with a rifle over their shoulder marching down the road the Germans.

BRODERICK, G.:
LSHG

Amiens was the main railhead centre there and it actually could paralyze or cut the whole thing in two.

They had - They had it in the bag, so to use the slang American phrase. That's when the Canadian Cavalry Brigade was thrown into Moreuil Woods.

It was General Seeley who actually led that bunch and he took the Brigade right in to take Moreuil Woods again. There was two woods in there as I recall it. Moreuil Woods and Rifle Woods.

And the Fort Garry Horse they were also in and they went in next to the R.C.D.'s and then on you had your Strathconas.

BRYANT, James:
LSHG

We were watching it. We had a grandstand seat there. We just got through to the edge of the wood where you could see when "C" Squadron come around there. Boy, it was a pretty sight, and I remember I was just jumping up and down about two feet, you know, all full of excitement. Boy, they took an awful cutting up though.

The men were shot out of the saddles you know, and the horses, most of them were wounded, hit. They all came back around and joined our horses behind the wood. And they'd stand there and bleed to death. They'd put one foot out a little to one side and then another, you know, just trying to hold their weight up and then they'd finally just sag.

NARRATOR:

No fiercer fighting than that at Moreuil Wood was seen on any front. The Cavalry gave the enemy no quarter.

FERGUSON, W.:
LSHG

I know when we were going through Moreuil Wood there was German prisoners laying there dead. We just shot them in the back anyway because we had some of our fellows bumped off, you know. They'd possum and they kicked off a couple of our fellows, and we figured another bullet That was going through Moreuil Wood. We just took and shot them as we went by because if they were dead another bullet wasn't going to do them any bloody harm. So we just did that there and kept going.

MARLOW, H.A.:
LSHG

As we entered into the edge of the Wood there was a machine gun there with three or four men laying slumped over it but there was one that was still alive. German He was just raising his hand and this Sergeant Stewart put his rifle to his shoulder and bingo, and I saw the bullet rip right through his neck. This German. I says, "God", I says, "what did you want to do that for, he was as good as dead anyway." He says, "You never know whether the buggar was going to shoot you or not. You don't want to trust 'em at all."

I remember seeing one of our fellows, I don't know who he was, but the front of his face was all shot away and he was still alive. He was clawing where his face should be. Somebody wanted to shoot him, you know, and I couldn't shoot him. I said, "No, I can't shoot him. I just tried to shoot a horse and couldn't shoot it." After that I couldn't shoot a man. After

(CONT)

MARLOW, H.A.:(cont) that I couldn't shoot a man. After I tried to shoot a horse, I couldn't shoot a man. But we stayed in that Wood all that day.

NARRATOR: By the end of March the German thrust on Amiens had become less determined. On the night of April 7th Ludendorff abandoned it entirely to concentrate the German power elsewhere on the Western Front.

ROSS, Alex.:
 Artillery However, ultimately the attack petered out. I think they made a mistake. Being Germans they were methodical and everything was planned and when things didn't go exactly as planned they didn't change their plans. If they had changed their plans things might have been a bit different, although I don't think the result would have been any different because the Commander-in-Chief still had the whole Canadian Corps up to strength, absolutely fresh in reserve.

ORMOND, D.M.:
 10th But they had come a long way, you understand. And they were just foot-slogging and they had pretty near spent their distance and couldn't get people up. You see to bring up supplies for a frontage of fifty miles and a couple of hundred thousand troops is not a mean business, it's sort of like taking a sandwich and going ahead.

ODLUM, V.W.:
 11th Inf.Bgde. It was the fact that as they came on they got slower and slower in the movement because of two things: First, communications fell down, the further the line the longer the distance, the slower is the message back and forth and supplies up there were running out. They were difficult to get through. The Germans were having a bad time at the forward area. They didn't know what they were to do and with what they were to do it. They were just too far away, too much out of reach, they had gone too far.

NARRATOR: During the first week in May the Canadian Corps was relieved by the British 17th and 18th to begin a period of intensive training that had an emphasis on mobility and which would last until the 15th of July.

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, "FLANDERS' FIELDS", Chapter 14, "AMIENS AND ARRAS".

NARRATOR: August 1918 found the Allied forces in the west enjoying an overall superiority for the first time since March of that year and the Yanks were coming at the rate of a quarter million every month. The hour had struck for the Allies to assume and retain the initiative; to turn from the defensive to the offensive.

On 28th July General Foch issued orders for a massive assault out from Amiens in the direction of Roye.

The element of surprise, the almost forgotten factor of warfare, was to be re-introduced and an elaborate deception was begun.

The initial step in planning the operation was to select the gun emplacements and reconnoitre the terrain and the enemy positions.

Senior artillery officers went to work first -- often in disguise.

STEWART, J.S.:

About the 10th July they brought us out and discussed with us the plans for Amiens at Corps Headquarters showing us where we were going to attack and telling us to go down and find suitable positions for seven brigades of artillery.

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:
Corps Arty.

To get down there without attracting attention we had the Corps' sports. We went down there and made ourselves conspicuous and then we dropped out and slipped

(CONT)

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:
(cont) off and we put on Australian badges and lived with the Australian Corps while Morrison and I did the artillery reconnaissance and I began to get together the counter-battery information that we were going to have to use.

ODLUM, V. W.:
11th Inf.Bgde. The ground over which the reconnaissance should take place was ground where the Germans were. We couldn't go out and make much of a reconnaissance there. We had to do it almost entirely by map.

ORMOND, D.M.:
10th The French, they didn't know as a matter of fact that we were coming in. We removed all our badges and we looked more like newspaper correspondents so that the French troops had no idea who we were and not even their officers, and we went right down into their line.

NARRATOR: Meanwhile elements of the Corps were feinted north into Belgium, an historic hoax.

FRYDAY, J.N.:
27th Previous to going to Amiens we were called up one night at 4. o'clock in the morning and we were taken away up to Belgium. We were decoyed up into Belgium, went into the line at Cassel the first night and up to the old front line, and they pulled off a raid purposely, and we had a couple of casualties. We left some dead in their trenches.

PINKHAM, W.C.H.:
27th Our helmets were marked with a green diamond on each side. We was to leave a couple of these helmets lying around so the Heinies could find them - and they did, mind you, they did know that the Canadians were there. And they did believe that the Canadian Divisions or Corps were being transferred to the north.

GREEN, Howard:
54th Actually one battalion of the Sixth Brigade, the 27th Winnipeg Battalion, was sent up to Ypres and it paraded through the streets of one of the towns. I think it was Cassel.

MacNAB, Alan:
Cyclist Quite a few Canadian battalions had moved north in broad daylight. They dropped letters and they dropped buttons and they dropped badges all the way north till they got up to Ypres.

LATTA, W.S.:
29th

And they had the Germans completely convinced that the Canadians wherever they went there was going to be trouble and here they were up in Belgium.

O'NEILL, Joe:
19th

The 20th Battalion put on one of the finest acts that could be put on. They put an attack on and they took a piece of German trench. Well then they retreated. But when they retreated the odd officer forgot his tunic, somebody else had forgot his haversack with his official operation orders for this attack all laid out, everything was there.

Well actually after August 8th, they found copies of these fake orders right in German Headquarters, and the whole thing all translated into German, and that was the cleverest move and the best bit of staff work that could be pulled anywhere. It was arranged in such a way that you had to believe it; it looked absolutely a hundred percent.

SPENCER, D.D.:
R.C.R.

So they put two and two together and thought, "The Canadians are coming back to the Belgian front, back to Ypres." So what happened? They brought all the great concentration of troops all the way up to the Belgian front. In the meantime, silently, the Canadian Corps and the British Army were moving south and this was just before the famous Battle of Amiens. One of the most colourful, strategic, planned things I think ever in the annals of history.

MacNAB, Alan:
Cyclist

At any rate, at the time we were attacking at Amiens the Germans were detraining three or four or five trainloads of troops that they had just taken out of Amiens to get up into the Ypres Salient because apparently they thought the Canadians were going to hit there. We were a spearhead corps in a sense.

NARRATOR:

Some went on north past Ypres to the coast.

TURNER, A.:
50th

We'd been travelling around for a week before the 8th of August and we'd been heading for the coast. Well about the 6th of August two days before the drive started we noticed a signpost saying 16 kilometers to Abbeville. Abbeville was a seaport, and that started the rumour that we were going to Russia, we were going to embark.

PINKHAM, W.C.H.:
27th

And then we were suddenly whisked out of there and rushed away back down to Amiens.

NARRATOR:

Then having convinced German Intelligence that this spearhead force would strike out through the old Belgian Salient, abruptly the movement was reversed. With the utmost secrecy and in the dark of night the movement south to Amiens began. By train, by London bus, by motor lorry and by Shanks's mare.

PRICE, C.B.:
14th

The secrecy was certainly well kept. It was hot, hot August weather, terribly hot. We went down partly by train and partly by the old London bus. A lot of marching though, of course, my goodness we marched a lot then.

HOLMES, C.B.:
25th

And that was the only time that we were ever moved by truck. Otherwise you always moved on your feet. These trucks came along and you should have heard the boys - we were winning the war, the trucks were going to carry us along for once, and we arrived down at Amien the night before the show..

O'NEILL, Joe:
19th

We got on the train and of course in the morning when we woke up we were away down the Somme, the old Somme battlefields. And all these boys, especially the old-timers, they looked out the windows and they saw the name on a station and, oh, if you could have heard their real old soldier stuff about the blankety blank staff that got us on the wrong train and shot us south when we should have been going north. Well say, to hear the boys it certainly was a treat.

BELL, George:
58th

We were routed south to a - a long way back of Amiens, long way. We were dumped off then, the whole battalion. Along with other battalions the whole Canadian Corps was concentrating. A most fantastic thing, because in the daytime you were in the woods, you weren't allowed to go outside them, and you looked over quite a peaceful countryside, and once dark came

(CONT)

BELL, George:(cont)

it just teemed with transport and men, and you just kept, night after night, moving forward until you came in - our assembly point was Boves, B-o-v-e-s, Boves Woods, a very famous place.

BROWN, Bob.:

46th

And I remember, it was a pay day and every man as he produced his pay book, they stuck a sheet on the inside of the cover, and all that was written on it was "keep your mouth shut". And this was stuck in his pay book just to impress on him not to talk to anybody even Canadians. We weren't to say who we were or anything. And we started this march to the south. And we marched in the dark. We never moved till it was dark and we marched all night, and slept in the daytime.

And this went on for about eight days, eight nights. And we finally landed down at Amiens. And the attack was slated for daylight of the 8th. And we travelled that night in the dark and I don't know who our guide was but we took all the back roads. The main roads were filled with trucks and artillery and balloons.

SHIELDS, T.T.:

PPCLI

You marched from one small village to another at night, your battalion would, and each battalion of your brigade would be doing the same thing and each brigade of that division would be doing the same thing. Gradually this strength was drawn, moved like a big sand pile. It was all brought into the Amiens area where we would go with the Australians on our left and the French on our right.

PHILPOTT, Elmore:

Artillery

A very interesting thing happened. In the early years of the war the boys used to sing when they were going up to the line but then they got in that sort of bleak blank period and nobody sang. All through that time nobody sang. By some kind of a spiritual osmosis or something that when our boys went up to that Amiens thing they all went up singing. There was an entirely different feeling in the air from the minute that we began to move south from this ultra-secret operation to go to Amiens. There was a feeling in the air, the boys really believed that this was it.

RUTHERFORD, G.S.:

52nd

You had the feeling that everything was well planned, well organized. People knew what they were about, the staff was on the job. Everything seemed to go like

(CONT)

RUTHERFORD, G.S.(cont) clockwork and for the first time on your march you could hear the troops singing.

MacNAB, Alan:
Cyclist

In the middle of the night we woke up and we heard this battalion coming up, Canadian battalion, and they were singing at the top of their voices, just lifting, and they went by within ten feet of our heads we were in this barn. I don't think there was a dry eye in that barn. You could hear some of the boys sobbing, just something was gripping us.

On the 4th of August the King called a very special National Day of Prayer and from that day on a new spirit seemed to enter into the British Armies and from that day on we never backtracked once. From that day on we went forward.

NARRATOR:

The Artillery reconnaissance had been made; twenty-six Brigades of guns secretly assembled and the targets allocated.

O'NEILL, Joe:
19th

And they had the biggest concentration of artillery that was used in the war. And they had those guns for miles, wheel to wheel, and one layer after another. They were poked out through bushes, they were behind under trees and they were covered. Even in the morning, before the jump-off, they had an old artillery plane without a muffler going up and down the line to draw the Germans attention to this terrific noise, and if they heard any noise, of course they would blame it on this old plane.

DUNLOP, W.A.:
116th

Although why the Germans didn't know that this attack was assembling I'll never know because it got to a point where they had to move troops in the daylight and the roads were just piled with troops, so our Air Force must have done a very fine job to keep them from observing it.

CAMP, R.H.:
18th

If the Germans had ever got wise, oh it would have been a terrible slaughter, because we were packed in there so tight, well you couldn't move until you got the order to advance, you see.

ODLUM, V.W.:
11th Inf.Bgde.

It was wonderfully well done. I think the Germans were completely fooled.

STEWART, J.S.:
Artillery

Not only was the discipline good but everybody was on the qui vive to do well.

MACKLIN, W.H.S.:
19th

A day or two before the battle we were all taken to a great big grindstone and had our bayonets sharpened, and then we were given a very careful briefing on the battle.

CAR, S.J.:
10th

The Colonel explained the battle plan to us. The barrage would open at 4, the first wave would go. At 4.40, our time, would come the 10th Battalion and we would start and follow up the waves that were ahead of us and as each wave made its objective the following waves would go through it leap-frogging. And if all went according to plan we should reach our objective at 5 in the evening.

TURNER, A.:
50th

On the night of the 7th of August we went through Amiens, right through the city and when we got on the outskirts we noticed each side of the road was lined with guns of all calibre and all camouflaged. And we kept on going and then we came to a stop by a big fifteen-inch naval gun. It turned out that this fifteen-inch Naval gun was the gun that was to give the signal for the whole of the front to open up. When that went off all the rest of the guns would open up.

ORMOND, D.M.:
10th

The artillery by this time were well enough experienced and trained that they could fire a barrage without registering. The artillery moved in during the night, never having fired a shot and they took up their position and all their shooting was from the map.

LOGAN, H.H.:
4th M.M.G.

We congregated in Boyes Woods which gave us protection, the whole Corps under these trees. We heard the tanks moving up along the road in the night in the dark and some of our boys had their legs sticking out too far and others had their packs out too far and they were run over by the tanks.

LUNT, A.G.:
4th

We wandered around and finally we landed in Boves Wood. We got our maps and we were given our instructions. That night we went through and, boy, we couldn't get up the roads. We had to go on the side because there were tanks, there was everything going up

MacKAY, D.R.:
LSHG

That was on the 7th of August, and all along that road all night long was the rattle of tanks and cavalry and infantry going up the line, and it came on a terrible fog, it was just a mist, you couldn't see nowhere.

NARRATOR:

Now the Corps was positioned and poised to strike a staggering blow. The First Division in the centre, the Second on the left, the Third on the right.

At first light, 4.20 A.M., this mass of guns would bellow.

McARTHUR, D.C.:
55 Fd.Bty.

When the thing kicked off on the morning of August 8, 1918, which Von Ludendorff, the German Chief of Staff, later referred to as "Black Monday", there was a terrific barrage from all types of artillery. What they call "drum fire" where they were really shoving the shells in one after the other just as fast as a gun would take it without destroying the gun's rifling, but it was almost solid sound.

NAGLE, N.R.:
78th

Oh boy! I never heard anything like it. Oh boy!

STITT, F.A.:
19th

We moved up quietly and there was one gun went off away back some place, and then the whole sky lit up. I never saw anything like it in my life, that barrage on the 8th of August. You couldn't hear yourself think.

LUNT, A.G.:
4th

Boy, all hell let loose all at once and there was really a barrage, beautiful. They really caught them with their pants down because we went by guns with the cap on the front of the muzzles and all the crew just laying all around them. You'd see machine guns there with the crew just laying all around them.

THOMAS, O.J.:
54th

We had maps on which every German battery was marked and we were told that every Canadian battery had one German battery that they were supposed to knock out.

STEWART, J.S.:
Artillery

There were two thousand two hundred that day pooped off and the only thing that we had to lay out our lines of fire was the steeple of the Church in a little village behind which did for seven Artillery Brigades. They all laid out their fire on that. And when we opened up there were two thousand two hundred all at one time, eighteen pounders. And then the heavies behind us. Boy they made a devastating force.

HANCOX, George T.:
PPCLI

Yes, the artillery was very effective. I know we saw one German artillery position about two miles behind their line. There were six guns there and all the gun crews were laying dead around them and they hadn't fired a shell. You see the country-battery work was so effective.

THOMAS, O.J.:
54th

As we went there were certain German batteries in small woods that we were supposed to look into, and I remember a particular one that I had to take some men into and when we got into this wood where there was a clearing, the German battery was there alright. They hadn't been even able to get the muzzle caps off their guns. They had their horses hitched up to their wagon and the drivers were killed on the seats of their wagon and the rest of them lying around the clearing and the only live thing in that clearing was a young German boy, he couldn't have been more than 16 or 17 years old. He was simply terrified because they had been told that if they were taken prisoners we'd torture them.

MACKLIN, W.H.S.:
19th

These guns were stacked up, wheel to wheel, and each of them had hundreds of rounds of ammunition beside it, and the shells came over our heads with an appalling shriek in the fog ahead and we simply lit cigarettes, shouldered our rifles, and walked off after the shells, and this is what we did until we reached the objective of the 19th Battalion.

STITT, F.:
19th

The objective of the 19th Battalion was a town called Marcelcave which was known to be a regimental headquarters of a German unit, and it was four and a half miles from the jumping-off place. Well we figured that four and a half miles was a long jump. But we got to Marcelcave alright. We found this German headquarters alright and after we got the betabbed Generals up the stairs from this deep dugout we investigated the place and found the porridge warm on the table, that's how badly we surprised them. They didn't know the first thing about that attack, not the first thing. There was a little bit of street fighting because it hadn't been completely demolished, although it was an awful mess with artillery fire. We were due in there at 6 o'clock, 6 A.M., and at 6.30 we were supposed to look for the Fifth Brigade to leap-frog us, and they did right on the button. They jumped over us and we could see them going into the blue. That afternoon at 4.00 o'clock we were bomb proof, we had gone so far ahead. Oh it was a wonderful day, the 8th of August, it sure was.

NARRATOR:

Wave after wave they went - - - sweeping across open country.

PRICE, C.B.:
14th

It broke right out into open fighting right away and instead of going forward in yards as they did in these other offensives, they went forward in miles.

MASON, D.H.C.:
3rd

The thing was done in three waves. Each Division attacked with one Brigade; went a certain distance, to a certain line; stopped; and the next Brigade went through it, carried on, to another line and then the final Brigade went through to the finish.

It was one of the best planned, best carried out, battles of the war.

CAR, S.J.:
10th

In no time at all we were right out in nice pleasant open countryside. That was the best executed and the best picked out plan that was ever pulled off. If "Old Guts and Gaiters" planned it ---- (excuse me, I mean General Currie) if he planned it why he did a masterpiece of work.

SHIELDS, T.T.:
PPCLI

The Germans were caught, there's no two ways about that.

O'NEILL, Joe:
19th

The Germans were taken so completely by surprise that I had my breakfast that morning in a German Engineer's dugout with hot coffee still on the stove.

SHEPPARD, H.L.:
Artillery

They weren't prepared at all when that attack started.

SIVERTZ, Gus:
2 CMR

We just sailed through that morning. It was unlike anything we had known, no trenches, no trenches, blazing sunlight and absolute gaiety among the troops. Then we were halted below in a little escarpment and the Fourth Division leap-frogged us, and we built bivvy fires and made breakfast over little fires.

ORMOND, D.M.:
10th

We went ahead that day and took the whole of our front. We were there ahead of time so we could have gone on for I've no idea how much long, but it was a matter of having to leap-frog the artillery. It wasn't the opposition of the Boche that stopped us at all, it was the pressure of the artillery.

JACK, Alec. W.:
54th

"A" Company on the right of the 54th advanced along the road from Amiens to Roye, and the French Army were just across the road. After we got our objective we sat back and watched the French advancing on the other side of the road. We could see these German soldiers hiking it over the hills and the Frenchmen after them, which was quite interesting. It was more or less of a picture-book advance, it was really our introduction to open warfare.

NAGLE, N.R.:
78th

We crossed this creek and up the other side of the hill, and a whole Brigade of Cavalry come down the one bank of this ravine and passed through our lines and went into action. Then we followed along after them. But the part that remains in my memory that way was the wonderful sight of these, oh maybe a thousand or so horsemen, just going down one side of the valley and up the other and went into action. Within an hour they had so many casualties.

NARRATOR:

Now the Cavalry, who had waited for so long in the wings, swept onto the stage. And what a glorious entrance it was. Some of the Cavalry Brigades had seen action before ... in the attack on Cambrai in the Spring ... in blunting the spearhead of the German push at Moreuil Wood ... but today all the British Cavalry rode out like coloured pages from an illustrated history book. They started from far back behind the heavies, to make a glorious sight that would shortly take on the colour of darkest tragedy. This day the sophistication of enemy weaponry would prove that Cavalry rightly belonged in the history books.

McARTHUR, D.C.:
55th Fd.Bty.

And then behind our guns a great army of tanks of all shapes and sizes went forward. Following the tanks there were the cavalry regiments. The cavalry regiments had been doing "Joe" jobs during the war but the High Command was made up principally of cavalry generals and they refused to be disabused of the idea that the cavalry shouldn't perform finally some great and decisive role in winning the war, so these cavalry regiments went behind our guns. They were jumping the trenches, they had little pennants on their lances and made a very brave sight; splendid old cavalry regiments with great traditions like the Bengal Lancers and the Inniskillen Dragoons, the Scots Greys and the Canadian Fort Garry Horse, the Mississaugas, the Strathconas. Most of them were represented in this magnificent show. Well, naturally we felt, and I imagine the poor foot-slogging infantry felt, that the war was really on the way to the end when they saw the cavalry regiments going into action. Mind you, a day or so later there were a great many dead horses lying around.

CHARD, N.:
R.C.D.

We had been assembled in a park in the City of Amiens covered by big trees. I think there was around about probably ten thousand cavalymen were in there.

DRURY, M.H.A.:
R.C.D.

At zero hour we were considerably far back, in fact, about in line with the heavy artillery, and as we went forward we went through the medium artillery, and the field artillery until eventually we met the walking wounded coming back, and German prisoners being brought back. We went on forward until we saw the casualties laying on the ground and eventually we went through the infantry and got into actual combat with the Germans and we became the front line. And in the course of about two hours I think we passed through practically every phase of the battle.

BROWN, Bob.:
46th

And by noon we come to a big gully, and we were halted and told to have our dinner. And while we were sitting in this shoulder, in the valley in front of us a bunch of cavalry come up. And we had never seen any cavalry all through the war, in action. Well there was thousands of them. There was all the cavalry in the British Army, Canadians, Indian Lancers, Scots Greys, and this was quite a picture. And it give us a great lift to think that at last the cavalry was going to get in. And there was cavalry just as far as we could see.

And it wasn't very long before we caught up to this same cavalry that had gone through us, Fort Garrys; this time, though, all the horses were lying on their backs and some of the survivors hiding behind their bodies and firing over them. And we knew then that we were really in the battle.

McKNIGHT, G.:
26th

I remember there that was the first time I ever saw the cavalry in action, the Scots Greys. They went through our infantry units there that morning, just on the tear, and boys, it was a sight. An awful lot of them got knocked out. It was really the first time we had ever been in open warfare.

CROOKS, F.F.:
25th

On that morning, that would be August 9th, I saw a cavalry attack which was criminal to even think of. never saw anything..... it was just a terrible thing. It was a wonderful thing to see, but the slaughter was something terrible, horses and men, because it was on

(CONT)

CROOKS, F.F.:(cont)

an open country, flat, they had no protection at all and it was just, well it was sickening. The survivors were few and far between.

PRICE, C.B.:
14th

Almost the last cavalry attack on horseback. They came trotting up the road in fours and then they formed up into lines of squadrons and rode right on to a little town which they were supposed to take and the Intelligence was faulty, and the poor souls rode just right onto this wire and were completely wiped out by machine gun fire, and as they got to this road junction where they formed from fours up into lines of squadrons, they had it pin-pointed with these heavy five-nines, we used to call them Black Marias.

NARRATOR:

Everywhere that day the deadly Black Marias, the backbone of the German reguard action.

MacNAB, Alan:
Cyclist

We didn't have too much trouble until we got forward about five miles, when we ran into his reserves and he had quite a line of machine guns there but we finally got to this place where it was a ridge and it pretty near amounted to if you stuck your finger over the ridge you'd have it knocked off.

NARRATOR:

Although the infantry regarded it with something less than deep affection, we had one weapon that could succeed against machine guns ... the tank.

ODLUM, V.W.:
11th Inf.Bgde.

The aircraft pleased us most because they were overhead and we could see them but, with the tanks, we had all sorts of trouble because machines are very vulnerable.

ORMOND, D.M.:
10th

The greatest advantage the infantry got out of them was the crushing of the wire, to put the wire so that the infantry could pass over it. The principal reason the infantry wasn't keen on them, they were so easily stalled, and they were so slow, and they drew fire.

NARRATOR: And a lot depended on what kind of fire they drew.

As yet too lightly armoured they were sitting ducks for field artillery.

MacNAB, Alan:
Cyclist

Well, we were hung on this ridge and these eight tanks came up and went forward in line into the face of this machine gun fire which didn't bother them, of course, at all but they went forward to clean out these nests. Well on the next ridge which was probably a mile away, the Germans had an anti-tank gun and, boy, this fellow could shoot. He started out on what was our right-hand tank and he just went down that line, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven tanks. Seven shots, seven tanks on fire. When the eighth tank saw what was coming he started to zigzag and make his way home when he saw it was hopeless.

NARRATOR: The 13th bi-passed the corpse-choked Hangard Wood.

SINCLAIR, Ian:
13th

We were to attack on a front called Hangard Wood where there had been bitter, bitter fighting in the spring, where a German battalion and a British one had fought to a standstill in the spring and it was just a solid mass of bodies, the whole place, and we tried going through it in the attack and it was just impossible to even get through the mass of dead in there so we split and went around either side but it was an astounding piece of luck that day that everything went with us.

The Germans couldn't see us coming. The first break we ever had in the war, and then we moved so fast we over-ran the first lot and the rest never recovered. The biggest advance that had ever been on the western front in a single attack. It was beautiful.

NARRATOR: The highest of spirits carried them through that day and a feeling of exaltation was everywhere.

PHILPOTT, Elmore:

Everybody was in the most jovial mood. They felt in the air this really great victory. So we just pushed it all day and kept on going and we were miles ahead of the French.

HEMPILL, S.:
10th

We had gone so far. Here we had gone miles. We'd gone for nearly twelve hours, from four o'clock in the morning until three o'clock in the afternoon.

ROBERTSON, R.S.:
16th

The troops were just like dogs on a leash, as it were. Everybody was keen to go, you know, realizing the magnitude of the advance.

JOLIFFE, W.H.:
4th

For the first time we felt that we were winning the war.

WILLIS:

But overnight German resistance, negligible the day before, had stiffened. The Black Marias were waiting in the dawn.

ERICKSON, Oscar:
78th

But the next morning at about eight o'clock some enemy machine gunners had made their way into a clump of woods to our right some hundreds of yards out. Then the Colonel received orders that the 8th Battalion were going through. We looked back and we could see the 8th coming up in columns of fours, kicking up a dust that the enemy must have seen for miles.

Well eventually they reached where we were in this valley and then they got into position to go over the top and this was the bloodiest engagement of the war when the 8th Battalion broke over the hill. Because these German machine guns by this time were so well entrenched that they put up a fire that was just terrific, the 8th Battalion lost practically all their officers and they were finally taken in to capture the position by some of their non-commissioned officers.

NARRATOR:

Now the Germans who had introduced chemical warfare a early on as the 2nd Battle of Ypres would try another innovation. An ugly weapon with an ugly name --
Flammenwerfer -- the flame thrower.

SPROSTIN, J.:
10th

By jingo he started a heavy counter-attack about three o'clock in the morning of the 9th. I looked through my field glasses and saw these coming up, wave of them, dozens of them, and I noticed some of them seemed to have like a fire extinguisher on their back, and we give them a couple of bursts and down they went with these things. But when they started there was this liquid fire coming out of a spout and that was the first time that the Germans used the liquid fire. I sent three men out and they took this thing off the damn thing and sent it back to Battalion H.Q. One of the men who was carrying it when they riddled him and he went down, and the other fellow just pushed the gadget and it started to work, and the liquid fire was coming out and all up his side and it burned every bit of flesh and clothes and everything off.

SEYMOUR, L.C.:
27th

On the morning of the 9th, the artillery opened up again, smoke bombs and that, and we pushed off. We went to a place called Rosieres. Well the 29th and the 28th were ahead of us. We were supporting them. About four o'clock in the afternoon we were just outside Rosieres and we were leaving there and six German aircraft came over and machine-gunned us and bombed us.

GOODMURPHY, Arthur B.:
28th

Our helmets you know, ordinarily they feel like bath tubs on our heads. But this time they felt like peanuts.

SEYMOUR, L.C.:
27th

I think we lost about a hundred and twenty men altogether. We got off pretty easy, but the 28th and 29th, they lost somewhere around eight or nine hundred between the two of them, all machine gun fire it was.

ROSS, Alex.:
6th Bgde.

Well then of course the trouble started. That's when the open warfare idea sort of blew up. We were to go on the next day and we were still supposed to move in open warfare but it very soon developed that open warfare had not really arrived yet.

GREEN, E.:
Artillery

On the 9th we advanced but we were getting close to the old Somme line, the old Somme defences and the wires and the dis-used fallen-in trenches were there. Well, that provided a place for the German reserves that were rushed up to occupy to try and hold us up

(CONT)

GREEN, E.:(cont)

because the Germans, on this second and third day, really started to engage us because their guns were now beyond the range of our counter-battery guns and we had to move ahead to keep the infantry in range of our guns. We advanced and next day we took up more or less a permanent position in front of the Somme defences.

NARRATOR:

And by 10th August.

ORMOND, D.M.:

10th

The Boche had got back to a point where it would have been a complete new heavy operation to clean him out. We went in the next day and we took the three places in front and that was the finish.

PHILPOTT, Elmore:

Artillery

The Germans were, by this time, back in the old original Somme trench system and they were just waiting there. I thought, as far as we were concerned, we were very lucky because we were called out just right at the right time.

GREEN, D.:

16th

As a matter of fact it was August and a beautiful night, harvest moon, and lovely lovely weather, and we all felt pretty pleased about it.

NARRATOR:

Lt.-Col. A.G.L. McNaughton, General Currie's Counter-Battery Officer, had advised his Chief not to press the attack further on this front.

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:

Corps Arty.

We broke the Battle of Amiens off after we got up against the Roye wire. We were coming in against a mass of wire that had been there in the earlier phases when the 5th Army had been bumped out of it, the Roye wire was there, the strongest wire I've ever seen in my life was that, uncut, far worse than new wire because it ran through the hay fields and you couldn't see the damn stuff. I remember going around with General Currie and saying that we had reached the point where the power of the heavy artillery was attenuated and what we needed was a new break where we could get our legs under us and start again. Currie arranged with Sir Douglas Haig to break the battle right off at that point. We just stopped and the attack that was scheduled for the next day, it was never carried out.

NARRATOR: Having had the views of artillery, General Currie sought, informally, the infantry opinion ... mid-way in a haircut, Brig. Gen. Clarke was being tidied up.

CLARK, J.A.:
7th Inf.Bgde.

I was sitting in a field, on a kitchen chair, having my hair cut when along came General Currie. And we just stood and chatted very quietly and informally. He was very enthusiastic about the marvellous show we'd had on the 8th of August and again on the 10th of August and we were out in reserve at this moment. Now he chatted to me as an equal and he asked me, "Now what's your impression of the situation here?" "Well," I said, "I hope that you're not going to ask us to carry on the attack in this area." "Why?" "Well," I said, "It's the defences are impregnable. There's nothing but wire, trenches, concrete implacements. We are up against something that we couldn't find anywhere else and we'd just be battering our heads against a brick wall if we're sent in here." "Well," he said, "I agree and I'm just telling you confidentially that I have recommended to the Higher Command that we should not be asked to go on here." I said this to you, "You know if we could be taken out of this line and put in somewhere where we could effect a surprise as we did on the 8th of August. We're in a wonderful shape to continue the fighting but," I said, "to fight here will break the spirit of our men, to be asked to drive themselves against these defences."

NARRATOR: And Major Pope concurred.

POPE, M.A.:
Engineers

Well that was a cry that came out of the heart and throat of every private soldier in the Canadian Corps. We all saw it, we all shouted, "For God's sake stop, don't push us in any farther, we'll get smashed. Take us out. We're fresh still, we'll fight better somewhere else." And that was actually decided upon and we went up to Arras.

NARRATOR:

Meanwhile, the Supreme Allied Commander, Marshal Foch, was making plans for the Canadians which he confided, in private conversations to his old friend and countryman General Raymond Brutinel, commanding the Canadian Machine Guns.

BRUTINEL, Raymond:
Machine Gun

After the battle of the 8th of August General Foch was insistent to know if all the losses of the Canadians had been made good and what was the morale of the troops. I was able to reply that all the losses had been made good, and I said, "Regarding the morale, you cannot expect anything else. The morale was never as high as now, after such a crushing victory, after the number of prisoners they made, the number of guns they captured, the ground they re-took, they are absolutely full of bucks." He said, "I'm very glad to hear that because you know, considering everything, I think the Canadians are the force on which I can rely now to clean up between Arras and the Hindenburg Line. That's going to be a long task, a hard one, but the Canadians know that ground so perfectly and they are so determined that I think I can trust them to do so and I will go beyond that. I will probably have a long conversation with Sir Arthur Currie regarding the future events up to the Queant-Drocourt Line." He was so convinced that he had sized up the strength of the Canadian Corps properly that he said, "The Canadian Corps is really the ram with which we will break up the last line of resistance of the Germany Army." He said, "I am sure the Canadians are the battering ram with which I will break up the German lines but I will have a great deal to do to convince Sir Arthur Currie of the necessity of accepting that sacrifice because I know he is very sparing of his men but I will do my best."

At that time it was clear that, after having secured the acquiescence of Sir Arthur Currie, General Foch could see no reason to delay further the offensive he had in mind. Foch was a man of few words and he didn't like to talk abundantly about his future plans. He had them in his head, he spoke about them to the men directly concerned, and that is one of the reasons why I happen to be the custodian of these ideas because it was very convenient for him to speak to me in French and I was able, of course, to translate exactly his ideas to the Canadians, being a bit bilingual.

NARRATOR:

Now the battering ram was put to work.

ROSS, Alex.:
6th Bgde.

And then we found ourselves back in an old area around Arras. Well, of course, we never had any idea of another major attack in eighteen days after the first attack, but that's what we found we were for.

We went up to Arras and started from there.

McNAUGHTON, A.G.L.:
Corps Arty.

The attack out from Arras was a great show. That was our own country, you know. We knew it intimately.

VANIER, Maj. Georges:
22nd

The Canadian Corps was moved north to the region of Arras. The final objective was to be the capture of Cambrai. On the 26th August at 9. A.M. the 2nd and 3rd Canadian Divisions attacked in rain and broke the enemy lines. German losses were very heavy, the captured trenches having been well manned.

SHIELDS, T.T.:
PPCLI

We went over the top at Arras and our big show there was Jigsaw Wood, cleaning out the area up to Jigsaw Wood and the Canal du Nord on the left. Going over the first day was not too bad. We got most of the casualties from sniping. There didn't seem to be any concentrated gunfire, you know, the Germans weren't dug in, they weren't set to make a real scrap of it. Apparently these shots that were being directed at them by the Allied Command were catching them unawares repeatedly. We went over at Arras, we went over in the morning at Arras. There was not too much tough fighting, no hand-to-hand fighting and that afternoon we got stymied and we dug in in a wheat field and took over an old, an unused German trench and made the best of that.

TIMMS, M.H.:
21st

Well that was the Hindenburg Line, and the barbed wire was that thick. It was old solid mesh but our tanks, they kept going all night long, backwards and forwards and we wondered what in the samhill they were going for and they were going over the top of this barbed wire, and they pushed it down and they made a perfect bed for us to walk on and we ran right over the top of that. Our limbers and our trucks and lorries went right over top of that, there was nothing to it. They flattened it right out flat.

(CONT)

TIMMS, M.H.:(cont)

That was a smart idea. You couldn't make a mistake. And that same morning when we went over they had these steel pillboxes, steel you know. Machine guns in them you know, and do you know what our tanks did? They come right over and they rolled right over the top of them and pushed them down out of sight. Yes, they pushed them down out of sight. They could hear them you know and they made right for them and just went over the top, pushed them right out of sight, flattened them out. Men inside of them. Son-of-a-gun. Pushed them out flat. They couldn't get out of there.

BICKERTON, Irving J.:
85th

When we first went over I'll always remember the first troops we met were German boys. You know, like sixteen or seventeen years of age. The German troops we met that day, the first German troops we met when we jumped over in the forward positions were just kids, just kids. "Kammerad" -- you know. No opposition at all but, believe me, they had their men back at Mont Dury. That's where their better troops were, and after we got by the first forward troops then this terrific field of wire in front of the Hindenburg Line appeared before us. A lot of it had been broken up but still it was bad to get through and, fortunately, the tanks arrived and we just followed the tanks right through. They made a path and we followed them through and we got into this part of this Hindenburg Line and afterwards - we didn't have time then - we threw some bombs on the dugouts but they were tricky. The dugouts were eighty feet deep and beautiful inside, electric lights and everything. Well then beyond that was Mont Dury, you see. That was their second defence and Mont Dury was just like a ridge and I'll always remember one machine gunner who was chained to his gun. I actually seen this. This gunner, and how I remember it so well, he had apparently just come back from leave because his trousers had the neatest little patch in them. I noticed that, you know. I was one in the party that took this gun. He had the neatest patch. I know that he didn't do it. His mother or someone had very painfully patched that trouser and a great big man, he was huge. He was dead when we got in there but he certainly took an awful toll of Canadian lives that day, that one gun right there. He was a last ditch troop, he was a saviour, he was a sacrifice troop and, believe me, he made us pay for it. But going up that fire was terrific, going up this hill to Mont Dury.

LOVE, H.A.:
85th

The tanks were late. They were to come and we were to follow them. They, I think, were five or six minutes late and we finally fell in behind them and went along and our barrage was wonderful.

And the tanks, you see, the tanks cut a lot of the wire for us. We were following along in single file behind the tanks and, strange as it may seem, I had great difficulty in keeping my men in single file. They wanted to get in there, they wanted to get at them.

NARRATOR:

Strange, what the human memory retains. To one soldier, Arras means blackberries.

PALMER, M.:
49th

We were billeted in a woods there. I always remember we had a great feed of blackberries there, which was quite a treat to us. You know you often have a tin of this condensed milk, you know that real thick stuff, and I remember we got in there and this woods was full of these blackberries and we had a great feed of blackberries.

NARRATOR:

The motor machine guns undertook to protect the exposed left flank as the assault swept forward.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

This attack would have left the Canadian left flank wide open in front of Arras and our role was a part of the machine guns - the motor machine guns - took up the defensive flank and they held that flank against any possible attack. It was a very ticklish thing because we had about a four, five, six mile flank there, wide open.

BARBOUR, Royden:
25th

Up in the Canal du Nord, there were some bad spots there. We had a bad show on the way up at a spot called the Sensée River, but our Brigade, you see, we were made up of the 25th Nova Scotia, the 26th New Brunswick, the 24th Montreal English battalion and the Van Doos, the French Canadians. We always went in with the Van Doos. The 25th and Van Doos were

(CONT)

BARBOUR, Royden:(cont)

always together, so when we went in the Senses River we had no idea that it was going to develop into the show that it did. The 26th were on the right and we, the 25th, were in the middle, and the 22nd, the Van Doos, were on our left, and I had the left Company of the 25th. Well we got into a pretty bad strategic situation, a sort of a plateau effect surrounded by a valley and the Germans on the hills around and they gave us a pretty bad pasting that day. Colonel Kennedy got a V.C. that day, I recall, but most interesting to me at least was a little personal item. The 22nd Battalion on the left had all their officers hit and I saw their last officer hit and I saw their Medical Officer take over the Battalion, and then he was hit, so it was up to me to take over the 22nd Battalion, so a little young Captain, pretty wet behind the ears, brought the 22nd Battalion out that day, and I always get a kick telling my French Canadian friends down there that I once commanded the 22nd Battalion. And I happened to get a Military Cross this day and my citation merely says that I made contact with the 22nd Battalion and reorganized the situation. Well, that was just one of these ration deals. You did that just in the call of duty.

NARRATOR:

Major Georges Vanier then, as always, identified with the 22nd Battalion. He was there that desperate day. The attack had begun the day before - - -

VANIER, Major Georges:
22nd

27th August at 4.30 A.M. the Battalion was in position to attack. At 10. A.M. our Artillery opened an intense barrage on all the German positions. A few minutes later the 22nd went over the top. They were met by intense fire. Until noon they advanced slowly in small groups from shellhole to shellhole, crossing barbed wire in face of heavy fire, particularly from machine guns. And during the attack Lt. Col. Arthur Dubuc of Montreal, one of the founders of the Battalion, and a splendid officer, was struck in the eye by a bullet. I had been acting as liaison officer between the 4th and 5th Brigades, the latter commanded by Major-General Tremblay, who had been promoted to command the Brigade when Brigadier General Ross was wounded in the Amiens show. It was customary to

(CONT)

VANIER, Major Georges:

(cont)

leave one or two senior officers out of attacks to be in reserve in case of casualties. As I had been in the Amiens attack I was not detailed for Arras but when Colonel Dubuc lost his eye General Tremblay ordered me up to take command of the remnants and they were literally remnants.

I reached the battalion at dusk. The troops were rather scattered in shellholes without any definite trench line. I got in touch with Lt. Col. Clark Kennedy, in command of the 24th Battalion, which had attacked next to the 22nd. Our staffs at Headquarters and in the Companies were so depleted that we decided to spend the night together in one Headquarters. Out of our staffs it wasn't possible even to form a complete one. At about 9.30 the next morning the 28th August a staff officer who was a bit out of breath, which was not surprising as he had to go through a few artillery barrages, arrived with the news that our two battalions would be attacking again 12.30 noon that day. The signal for advancing would be a barrage. Clark Kennedy, a most gallant officer and a great gentleman if ever there was one, and I looked at one another but didn't say much. C.K., my senior, I was still a Major, who later that day won the Victoria Cross, said, "Oh, it'll be alright," and I nodded. But each knew what the other was thinking, knowing how depleted our battalions were. But neither he nor I had any complaint against the High Command. It was the natural thing to do. When an enemy is retreating and retreating fast one should continue to attack until the units are well nigh exhausted. A premature relief of troops might give the adversary time to pull himself together and put up quite a defence for some time. The troops must be relieved of course when one is sure that they cannot do anything more. Those who, by the hazard of war, find themselves sacrificed must accept it in the interests of a common good and a final victory.

As the men were scattered and in full view, except for the cover the shellholes could furnish, it wasn't possible to make any ideal distribution before the attack. I called a meeting in a large shellhole of the few officers who were left. I told them about the new attack and, in the circumstances, there was only one thing to do. When the barrage fell the officers were to rise and call on the men to follow and that is what happened, but we didn't get very far. The barrage was not a heavy one and there were many enemy machine guns.

NARRATOR:

One bullet in this hail of fire struck Major Vanier in the chest. While a stretcher-bearer was dressing his wound a heavy shell fell feet away, blowing the stretcher-bearer to pieces and wounding Vanier in the left leg while shattering his right knee. He was rushed by field ambulance to a clearing station where the right leg was amputated.

VANIER, Major Georges:
22nd

The General ^{com-}manding the 2nd Division, Major General Burstall, came to the clearing station and called to see me after the amputation and assured me that the High Command had been much impressed by the terrible losses of the 22nd, but that these were not in vain. On the contrary, they had facilitated the advance of the troops who came after them and thus they had contributed to the victory.

NARRATOR:

And some of the troops who did come after them acknowledged their sacrifice in soldier fashion from the roadsides on the slope of Chappel Hill.

HART, J.L.:
46th

Chappel Hill, it was a very steep hill. When we climbed that hill it was slippery as the dickens, and right here we saw a Lance Corporal and about 19 members of the Van Doos Battalion coming out and they were all that was left of the Battalion. Our entire Brigade was strung along on its way going up and every Battalion in the Brigade was called out and we stood to attention. They sure got a mopping - but anyway their problem was not their fault. They were led in by runners that led them into German wire. We saw their bodies hanging on the wire, riddled with machine gun bullets and they were all ranks. Practically their entire unit was wiped out right there. But we saw them coming out. The Battalion was alerted and we were formed up and we formed in battalion lines.

NARRATOR: Meanwhile the PPCLI were mopping up in Jigsaw Wood after a bitter hand-to-hand struggle.

SHIELDS, T.T.:
PPCLI

The next day at noon there was another attack opened up and we went over the top in daylight and pushed on through, up through, and captured Jigsaw Wood in open daylight and dug in on the other side of it and we hung on there. In the meantime the 49th had worked their way up and, with some help from the 42nd, had cleaned out this elbow on this river, and we straightened out the line and consolidated it so that it was a solid line. There was hand-to-hand fighting in the wood, hand-to-hand fighting in the wood, grenad and bombing, grenade and bombing, small arms fire. The Mills Bomb was a great weapon. You could do fairl long range with a Mills Bomb, you know, by hand. It was a great weapon.

NARRATOR: The 10th, 14th and 15th Battalions, carried the fight as far east as Cagnicourt and Villers-lez-Cagnicourt, beyond the Drocourt-Queant line and into the Buissy Switch.

SPROSTIN, S.:
10th

I know we had very heavy fighting both in Villers lez Cagnicourt and in Cagnicourt. Drocourt Queant line was the line and that was strongly fortified; and he fought right to the last. Tremendous. I never saw so many German dead as there was around that place. Thousands of them. They fought all that ridge, but the 10th took it between 7 and 8 o'clock at night. "C" Company attacked with "Dawn" Company in support and "B" Company. We were on the right and we flanked them - got right around - by-passed them. We got our objective. But "C" Company and "D" Company had some terrible heavy fighting and heavy casualties. Very heavy casualties, but the Germans had tremendous casualties too.

LOGAN, H.:
M.G. Corps

The German resistance was weakening. They got down to their final row of trenches with very heavy belts of wire in front of them.

CAMERON, Ross:
46th

In that last hundred days we only had one really rough time and that was taking the Drocourt Queant Line but the rest of the time it was a walkover. It wasn't easy, you understand, but it was good dry weather and we could go.

KYLE, A.W.W.:
87th

At the famous Drocourt Queant switch we went out with fighting patrols at night and we couldn't establish contact with the enemy, and we found out that the enemy were retiring during the night so that was the first morning that we really made an advance without any opposition. They had retired for some miles. I think that that probably was the greatest change in the war.

NARRATOR:

From this day on the war would never be the same.

Next week the Canadians cross the Canal du Nord, press on through Cambrai and Valenciennes to the historic city of Mons where they have a rendezvous with Armistice.

Next week: "THE LAST PUSH".

ANNOUNCER:

The first-person accounts of WORLD WAR I were researched, arranged and edited under the direction of Frank Lalor.

The series, originated by A. E. Powley, is written, narrated and produced by J. Frank Willis.

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, "FLANDERS' FIELDS", Chapter 15, "THE LAST PUSH".

NARRATOR: "THE LAST PUSH".

MACKLIN, W.H.S.:
19th

The Battle of Arras ended on the 28th of August and the battle was then taken on, on our front by the First Canadian Division and that is the Division which, about the 1st of 2nd of September actually breached the Hindenburg Line. Now, when that defensive position was breached, the German Front was in great danger of being completely overwhelmed and the German General, being pretty good, made a long retirement. They retired behind the Canal du Nord and there they dug in again, and this was another very considerable obstacle. So the Canadian Corps had to advance to the Canal du Nord and bring up their artillery and pile up their ammunition and stage another very difficult, very carefully planned, set-piece battle to get across this obstacle and break that. Now that battle took place nearly a month later. The crossing of the Canal was made the 27th of September.

NARRATOR: On August 4th, 1918, when the Canadians began to mount their massive attack in front of Amiens the war was four years old. From that date to the time of their triumphant entry into Mons on November 11th, they fought what history will call the Campaign of the Hundred Days. As they came up to the Canal du Nord on 26th September fifty of the one hundred days had gone.

The night of 26th-27th September was silent; the dark electric with expectation. There was no preliminary barrage and the air was still. In the crowded assembly areas infantry were closely bunched

(CONT)

NARRATOR: (CONT)

with artillery and machine guns brought forward this far in the hope of a rapid advance. Had German Intelligence passed the word to their artillery that so dense a concentration existed the slaughter could have been appalling. Our troops knew this and the night passed in an atmosphere of apprehension as the men waited impatiently for zero.

Rain began to fall and the cold ground became slippery, adding to the anticipated difficulties of the coming assault.

Morning came, overcast and dark, but the rain had stopped. Then at 5.20 A.M. the guns spoke out and the bursting shells crashed on the enemy positions.

The Canadians had crossed many a Canal before but the Canal du Nord was different and it presented some unique difficulties.

BLACKADER, K.G.:

13th

The Canal had a peculiar feature to it. The bottom of the Canal was level with the surrounding country, and the walls had been built up to carry the Canal, you might say, overland. More like an aqueduct.

GREEN, Eliot:

13th

It hadn't been finished by the French at the beginning of the war but part of it, on our left, was filled and, of course, the Germans were just on the other side of the dry part as well as the wet part. General Currie devised a very clever scheme there to cross the Canal in the dry area. His idea was to push one Division just across, enough to get a footing on the other side, turn it to the flank, then enlarge that bridge-head so they could get another Division through, and he pushed another Division straight through.

NARRATOR:

It was the Fourth Division on the right that would go straight through. The First Division would turn left and roll up enemy forces defending the wet section.

PRICE, C.B.:

14th

The night before we came up and occupied hastily dug trenches. Then, during that night, we moved up into these two strips of wood which still stand just like that today. We were on the left flank of an attack of 20 miles by the British armies. The Canal, from there up, was full of water, and at dawn we attacked. There was a tremendous barrage opened up.

NARRATOR:

The heavy machine guns, now an integral part of every major bombardment, had some of their numbers dig in at an unfortunate location.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:

M.G. Corps

We did perhaps the unusual by locating our gun positions in a long line, almost in front of the front line, digging in at night and then firing the next morning, and when the battle was joined, which was just before daylight, we came under very heavy artillery fire, terrific, and afterwards, and from captured maps I found that, unfortunately, I had put my positions right in the Germans Artillery SOS line. I thought at that time that they must have discovered us, but I found out afterward that it was one of those unlucky happenings of war.

NARRATOR:

Despite Captain Worthington's bad luck the heavy machine guns distinguished themselves again.

BOLE, A.:

M.M.G.

We had a 96 gun barrage facing the Germans at the Canal du Nord, one of the finest barrages that was ever fired in the war, I think, because the prisoners that came through said it was just like rain.

SPROSTIN, J.:
10th

What I particularly noted was the wonderful work that the artillery did, both the 18-pounders and the 4.5 and all the artillery in the creeping barrage before we jumped, and the marvellous counter-battery work. That was a wonderful assistance, it saved thousands of lives for the infantry.

BAYLES, S.M.:
46th

The barrage that morning, it was a real barrage bursting over you, and you just stood there and waited till it lifted.

PRICE, C.B.:
14th

As they started off they found there was a German machine gun post right in the centre there which hadn't spotted us and we hadn't spotted them. Fortunately it was pouring with rain, a very very bad night. The banks of this unfinished part of the Canal were something like twenty feet high I should think, and we were supposed to have scaling ladders brought up to us the night before. You can imagine my feelings when they didn't arrive. But, somehow, they climbed on each other's shoulders and got up. And the Battalion was completely successful.

MARSHALL, D.M.:
44th

There was nothing to it. We didn't need these ladders. The Germans must've been stupid that they didn't fill that Canal full of obstacles. Not a thing in it where we were. There may have been elsewhere.

BAYLES, S.M.:
46th

As soon as the barrage lifted we hopped into the Canal. There was no opposition. There were hardly any Germans left there. We weren't held up at all.

NARRATOR:

As the Third Brigade began its turn to the left and north, the Tenth Brigade pushed steadily on to the east

POPE, M.A.:
Engineers

The attack was to carry the Canal du Nord and then to go on over Bourslon Hill.

GREEN, Eliot:
13th

It was very interesting to see the shelling of Bourslon Wood. It's a high promontory halfway between the Canal and Cambrai. They plastered this with smoke and every other kind of gun you could imagine.

POPE, M.A.:
Engineers

One Brigade of Field Artillery that was to cover the second stage of the attack was on wheels, mounted, well in the rear, when the attack went in. As soon as the Canal had been carried it galloped forward, too position on an opdn field a couple of hundred yards behind the Canal and was firing the second stage of the barrage, and it reminded me of a picture you would see of artillery firing at the Crimea and they were firing in complete impunity because there was no reply from the Germans whatever.

CLARK, J.A.:
7th Bgde.

The Fourth Division went forward. Its objective was the capture of Bourslon Wood. I watched them go up the hill.

BROWN, Bob.:
46th

You could see the barrage moving ahead and the troops moving up on the rise, and that was a beautiful sight. And then the next unit had gone over our heads, and then the next Brigade, the Twelfth Brigade come over our heads again, and they took Bourslon Woods. That was quite a feat.

NARRATOR:

As the 11th and 12th Brigades took over the front from the 10th they ran into stiffening enemy resistance on Bourslon Hill. But, more important, the failure of the British 52nd Division on the right to keep pace with the Canadian advance resulted in the Corps' right flank becoming exposed to a deadly enfilade fire. The 87th and 75th Battalions pushed slowly around the northern edge of Bourslon Wood supported by heavy machine guns.

PEARCE, L.F.:
M.G.C.

We had an eight gun battery, four of which were attached to the 75th Battalion. We crossed the Canal and took over from the 10th Brigade on the ridge on the other side of the Canal and went down to Bourslon Wood, and in front of Bourslon Wood the 102nd Battalion, the men were just lying one behind the other. Apparently they had gone in single file in attacking the wood and had been held up quite severely there and we came up supporting the 75th.

NARRATOR:

The 12th Brigade to their left had also run into trouble, but moving painfully forward they made good their objective. The 85th Nova Scotians cleared the town of Bourlon.

MacKENZIE, A.W.:
85th

We were warned that there was a heavily reinforced trench in front of Bourlon Town and we were to wait outside that trench until the barrage played on it for fifteen or twenty minutes but, in the excitement of being under fire and being on the move and looking for cover and everything else, we forgot about the wait and practically all of us went right on into the reinforced trench and then we found we were in our own fire, and it was in that area, between the reinforced trench and the town of Bourlon, that I got hit with one of our own shells. I never found the Canadian artilleryman yet who hit me but every artilleryman I find I ask him what shooting he did around Bourlon.

We couldn't find much cover because every dugout in the reinforced trench was filled with Germans who had thrown their arms away, but the artillery fire was so heavy that they wouldn't come out. Now we had to bomb them out. We had to use grenades to bomb them out to make room for our own men in the dugouts and, as soon as they saw a grenade without the pin in it, they began to come out and then we'd send them back as quickly as we could and make way for our boys to get down below cover to be safe.

NARRATOR:

Further to the left, north of Bourlon Town, the 72nd Battalion of the 12th Brigade went through the 38th.

CLARK, J.A.:
7th Bgde.

I had the good fortune of watching my old battalion do its attack to the left of Bourlon Wood. It was magnificent to see those lads going up the hill and see them every now and then round up parties of fifty, sixty, perhaps a hundred Boche and send them back prisoners. The most heart-breaking thing was to see lads that I had given commissions to, like Bill Ross, one of my Company Commanders in the old 72nd. He was shot through the lungs, right from front to back. Huge hole in his back. And he came back, carried on a stretcher. He recognized me and chatted. I never expected to see him again. But he recovered.

NARRATOR:

The 1st Division had had a more successful day. The 3rd Brigade on the left of the Canadian line had fought its way north clearing the Canal du Nord for three miles widening the hole in the enemy defences and allowing the British 11th Division to push through. Meanwhile the 2nd Brigade, attacking east through the Bridgehead, had advanced six miles to the Douai-Cambrai Road. By nightfall patrols of the 10th Battalion were approaching the final objective, the enemy's "Marcoing Line". Here their advance was stopped by belts of heavy wire.

IRELAND, T.E.:
10th

And we had a lot of casualties on that advance. I remember very well that the Chaplain of the Battalion was the last man to leave the Douai-Cambrai Road when the 10th Battalion was relieved at midnight on September 27th. Now there was a man who had been a student at McGill University studying for the ministry, didn't believe in all this shooting and killing and so on. Didn't believe in violence but he joined as a stretcher bearer. He went to France, evacuated a wounded man under a murderous fire for which he was given the Military Medal. He suffered wounds in the process. He went back as a stretcher bearer, did the same thing under slightly different circumstances. This time he got the Distinguished Conduct Medal. His name was Captain Fraser. He was going to be invalided to Canada after recovering from the second wound. He went to Chaplain Headquarters in London and begged to be sent back to France as a Chaplain. He was the last man to leave the Douai-Cambrai Road. For his services that day during which he had completed the cutting of a barbed wire entanglement so that the stretcher parties could get through to get to the wounded men, of whom I was one, King George V gave him the Distinguished Service Order.

NARRATOR:

Though the 4th Division on the right had found the going slower, ending the day with a finger-tip hold on their first objectives, the Germans withdrew during the night. On the morning of the 28th, the 10th Brigade crossed the Arras-Cambrai Road assaulting toward the north-east to catch up the 1st Division and cut off Cambrai from the north.

BASS, Fred.:
47th

We just got across the road when Fritz laid a barrage right on the road, missed us but there was a brewery and we went through the holes in the wall of the brewery and this was murder because the Germans had the Marine division in waist-high trenches there and they had all those holes covered and if any man moved into that why they just mowed him down just like grass. It was terrible.

NARRATOR:

The 3rd Division had moved in on the right of the 4th. They attacked with two Brigades.

CLARKE, J.A.:
7th Bgde.

The 7th Brigade assembled beyond Bourslon Wood and, on the morning of the 28th they attacked and their objective was a hill, very high, a very difficult position. There was a line of trenches known as the Marcoing Line and it was a very difficult line, easily defended. The R.C.R., Royal Canadian Regiment, jumped off first at 6.00 A.M. They reached the Marcoing Line by 7.00 o'clock and captured a considerable number of prisoners but, unfortunately, their Commanding Officer, Colonel Dick Willis, was severely wounded and the battalion was handicapped as a result. And in the early afternoon the Princess Patricia's suffered a most heart-breaking disaster in the loss of their Commanding Officer, Colonel Charles Stewart, DSO. He was killed instantly in the early stages of the action by a German shell.

HANCOX, George T.:
PPCLI

I can recall another chap and I were sleeping one night at Raillencourt in this old abandoned German gunpit; there was a stretcher in the gunpit with a corpse covered with a blanket on it, and we didn't know until the next morning that was the corpse of Charlie Stewart, Colonel of the Pats and one of the best-known officers they had.

LITTLE, G. W.:
PPCLI

We wouldn't believe that Charlie got killed. We all thought that he was superman and wouldn't get killed at all. No one would believe it and his runner, Frances, came back. I said, "What about the C.O.?" He said, "Oh, he's gone." And he said, "Here's his sweater", and I knew the sweater all right. He said, "Here's his sweater," he said. "He was carrying it."

CLARK, J.A.:
7th Bgde.

Notwithstanding the loss of Charlie Stewart, the Patricias did wonderfully well and got forward. They got very close to this place called Tilloy and the high ground.

LEE, J.H.:
PPCLI

It seemed to be a pushover. We understand that the Germans were retiring and that sort of thing. We just were in open order, going across this field and by the time we struck the first roll of wire it was dark. Nothing happened, there was no firing. We were just advancing that was all, so this was just an obstacle to be overcome, so we clambered over as best we could through that first line of wire, and then there was a little break and then there was another line of wire. We were getting a little bit annoyed by this time at this wire, but we got in between the second and the third line of wire and then it happened. The Germans had just waiting until the whole regiment became entangled in this mass of barbed wire, and they were there with their machine guns and that was it.

LITTLE, G.W.:
PPCLI

We couldn't move so we came back about two hundred yards. My Brigadier, "No names, pack drill", he says, "Little do you know the first principles of warfare." I says, "I'm not sure. What are they?" "Well," he says, "one of them is to keep whatever you've got." I says, "We never had it, don't worry." So he says, "The 42nd is going to do it." So he told Royal Ewing that they

(CONT)

LITTLE, G.W.:(cont)

were going to do it and Royal Ewing said, "We don't want to do it. The PPCLI couldn't do it, and we can't do it." "Why?" "Because there's too much wire." He said, "There are the aerial photographs. There's no wire there." Royal says "The PPCLI tell us there's wire. We believe them. If we told them there was wire they'd believe us too. We work together." And we did. "We'll do it anyway."

The High Command had a strategic plan that they were going to win the war before they knew it, before we knew it, before anybody else knew it, and we were told to do impossible things and we were told to do them.

CLARK, J.A.:
7th Bgde.

Well then, on the morning of the 29th of September, the 42nd and 49th attacked the Tilloy position and made slight gains and the Germans counterattacked very vigorously but the 42nd and 49th managed to hold their gains.

LITTLE, G. W.:
PPCLI

They jumped off from where we were towards the place where we'd been. They got there. They had 340 casualties in ten minutes because of the wire. The wire didn't show because, mind you, this was in September and they'd been taking pictures all through August and so on. It had all grown up, whatever it was, weeds or what. Well you can't take pictures of wire unless you get a shadow, so there were no shadows, so there was no wire. They got the hell knocked out of them.

NARRATOR:

To the right of the 7th, the 9th Brigade was fighting its way into Cambrai's suburbs along the Arras Road. The 116th Battalion met a stiff determination to hold the city.

BONNER, Arthur:
116th

We came up to a place called St. Olle which was a suburb of Cambrai, and we got instructions to attack there and I think we had about two companies pretty well wiped out there. They met us with machine gun fire and just wiped out platoon after platoon as it went over. I remember one platoon of "B" Company. They were right in extended order, in line, their officer, a Lieut. Norton, just in behind them and they were all lying there dead, the whole platoon just wiped out to a man.

ALLEN, E.P.S.:
116th

That was the end of them. We had to go across the Arras-Cambrai Road and the Germans put down a terrific barrage on this road. I don't know how we ever got through it, as a matter of fact.

NARRATOR:

The next morning the 116th took St. Olle, enabling the 8th Brigade, the Canadian Mounted Rifles, to get into the City's periphery. They fought their way into the district of Neuville St. Remy but casualties were heavy.

PARSONS, M.E.:
2 CMR

Our Bandsmen who were stretcher bearers, moved in to pick up the wounded. One was a little chap by the name of Murdoch from Toronto. He's still there. He was a drummer, one of the Bantams from Victoria, and when he got down to the dressing station the sergeant said to him, "Murdoch, you've got holes in your tunic", and he looked around and he said, "Yes, sergeant, and moths didn't make them, either." And he had holes in his tunic on both sides of his body and he hadn't been scratched.

That night Captain McGregor took me with him and he wanted to make a reconnaissance of the area. Reconnaissance! He wanted to take Cambrai. We went past the outpost and we waded through the drainage canal (of the main canal) up to our waists, slopped through there as quietly as we could and walked around there for a while quietly and we stumbled over a couple of German sentries that weren't awake. They were asleep at the switch and they're still asleep as far as we're concerned. We looked around some more and we came back. Waded back over.

NARRATOR:

North of the city, on the 30th September the 7th Brigade again attacked across the Douai-Cambrai Road to take Tilloy.

CLARK, J.A.:
7th Bgde.

The third attack on the three main points of the Cambrai-Douai Railway, Tilloy and Tilloy Hill, was assigned by the Division to the 7th Brigade. Well, that assault commenced at 6.00 o'clock on the morning of the 30th and it was met by heavy machine gun fire and artillery fire but, by a very brilliant feat of arms and against the most determined resistance, the Patricias secured the roads through the centre of Tilloy by 9.00 A.M.

LITTLE, G.W.:
PPCLI

We went down this bloody sunken railway and really had a picnic down there. We caught the damn Germans not looking, sort of enfilading them, killed a hell of a lot of them but we got to this and we get to get to Tilloy. It won't be identified on the map, there's nothing in Tilloy. Go straight at it and, when you get there, make good the road behind it. Well, all there was in Tilloy were about three or four or five trees. There was a small grove of trees, spread out quite a bit. The bloody things were full of machine guns. And I lay in this bloody railway embankment and see the bugger pull the string with the guns up there. They punished us like the devil. Making them go out, which was a victory making them go out, because it was a shield for Cambrai.

CLARK, J.A.:
7th Bgde.

The R.C.R., on the left, advanced successfully but due to the situation on their left and murderous machine gun fire from Blécourt, could not hold the ground and they were obliged to fall back to Sancourt. The 49th Battalion on the right of the Patricias formed a defensive arc around the north and the village of Tilloy.

PALMER, M.:
49th

While I'm coming down along this road I meet a Military Policeman on horseback. He said, "Are you going out wounded, forty-niner?" And I said, "Yes." "Well," he said, "will you take this officer with you." He was a German officer, a Doctor. He said, "We can't let them go out alone." I said, "Okay, Fritz, come on with me." Many years later I was up the Peace River country and I was running a boat up there. These two big husky fellows came down to book passage on our boat and we looked at each other, and I said I think I know you, and he said well your face looks familiar to me. We started to compare notes and finally we pegged each other. I said were you in the Military Police and he said yes. I said do you remember handing a German Doctor over to a wounded 49th fellow, and he said, "by gosh, yes."

NARRATOR:

On 1st October the 3rd Brigade swept past Cambrai to the north to reach the villages of Bantigny and Cuvillers.

DUNLOP, James:
16th

Cuvilliers was the last big action we were in. It was just outside Cambrai. Beyond Cuvilliers there was some high ground that looked right onto Cambrai. Well, we went off and headed off on our attack and everything went fairly well as far as we were concerned, mind you, but I can say this much -- that the German trenches that we took there, I never saw so many machine guns in any place in my life. I think they must have been getting ready to attack us and we caught them before.

NARRATOR:

The day had not gone well. For most of it the 1st Brigade had been pinned down by enfilade fire. Under the heavy pressure of violent and repeated counter attacks the 3rd Brigade withdrew from Bantigny and Cuvillers.

The 3rd and 4th Divisions advancing across open meadowland to the right of the 1st, had a like experience. When they tried to get southeast across the Canal De L'Escault, thus providing the northern arm for an encirclement of Cambrai they ran into withering fire. They too were forced to withdraw and fight furiously to hold their initial gains.

KYLE, A.W.W.:
87th

As the Germans retired they blew up all the crossroads and we were up forward there without proper artillery support and without proper water and proper food, and they put on a very very courageous defensive action and our casualties in those last three days of the Cambrai show were pretty heavy.

(CONT)

KYLE, A.W.W.:(cont)

We didn't have a skeleton of a battalion left when I come out of the line there. There were only two officers left on the forward line in my battalion -- two! And I had five bullet holes on my equipment and uniform. I had bullet holes in my water bottle, I had them through the arm of my coat. I had them through the skirt of my coat. I had a bullet in the sole of my shoe from these machine guns, but I never got a scratch. Unbelievable. It was just a miracle I never got a scratch. But they were being knocked down around me like flies. The trouble was in that meadow fighting in that last stage of the war the German machine guns were firing at knee and ankle height so if a fellow got hit in the leg he got down and they'd shoot him in the body. One of our most wonderful Company Commanders, Alfred Hannah, I think he was hit two or three times, after he'd been hit the first time, even on the stretcher.

RUTHERFORD, G.S.:
52nd

First and only time I got sniped by a field gun. When the Germans had been driven back down in the valley there was a German gun crew and they were very very brave men. They hadn't retreated. Their infantry and everything had gone and they stayed down there and they were sniping, sniping with a field gun, at everything that moved on the hillside, and we first noticed a shell came near and in a minute another one came near, and then I looked down and I could see these, they were quite a distance away. It might have been a thousand yards but I could see the man and I could see the gun firing and I finally realized they were sniping at us.

BONNER, Arthur:
116th

North of Cambrai, a place called Ramillies, we came under heavy shelling there and Major Carmichael, the Commanding Officer, got wounded in the face and I remember a scout and I walking with him, and well he finally got so weak that we practically had to help him. Finally I says to him, I says, "Look sir," I says, "I've helped wounded men out of battle," I says, "I'll be damned if I'm going to help one into battle," and that was when he turned around and went back to the First Aid Station.

NARRATOR:

Had the day been more successful the 2nd Division would have passed through the 4th and captured the City of Cambrai.

ROSS, Alex:
28th

They were supposed to get the line at the canal then we were supposed to attack through them and capture Cambrai. But the day we arrived we found that the attack stalled. It was quite impossible to carry out the attack from the ridge overlooking Cambrai from the north. The ground slopes right down to the canal. Absolutely flat. Not a vestige of cover of any kind at all on it. Well, to advance in daylight down that against entrenched troops concealed in the canal bank was absolutely impossible. So the attack was halted then for a few days, reorganized.

NARRATOR:

That night the 4th Division went out of the line together with most of the 3rd and part of the 1st Divisions. They were relieved by the 2nd Division.

Brigadier General Clark recalls a feeling of depression and gives his reasons.

CLARK, J.A.:
7th Bgde.

Between the 28th and 30th the Brigade made four separate attacks, each on a scale that would normally have entitled it to relief by fresh troops but, at that time none were available.

Never have I felt so depressed as I felt after that battle. It seemed impossible to break the morale and fighting spirit of the German troops. We felt that this Boche could not be beaten, certainly not in 1918. He fought magnificently and in a most determined fashion. He discouraged a great many soldiers in the Canadian Corps. Our losses had been heavy. I felt, somehow, that I had failed in the leadership that the troops were entitled to. My greatest consolation, however, was when the fresh relieving troops made the victory decisive and forced the precipitate retreat from which the Boche never recovered.

NARRATOR:

On the night of the 8th-9th October, the fresh 2nd Division, which had not been engaged before in the Canal du Nord operations, prepared for the new assault.

ROSS, Alex.:
28th

And then we had the job, my Brigade, in conjunction with the 3rd Division, to attack from the north and capture Cambrai. We had to get Cambrai before we could consider the war over. That cut off the communications and all sorts of things. It was an important center for them. Cambrai was a very solid city protected by a Canal all around it.

OLIVER, Doug.:
18th

One of the greatest stories of the Cambrai encirclement was when the 2nd Division jumped the Canal at midnight.

McKNIGHT, G.:
26th

They gave us all a white band to put round our arm because we were going across there after night. Now the idea of that white band was that anybody that we met without a white band, we took them to be enemies.

Cambrai was right in front of us and a fairly large city. Well we weren't going to go through Cambrai. Our idea there was to go round the back of the city and we had to cross this little bridge affair in single file.

HOLMES, C.B.:
25th

The immediate trouble you ran into on that was you were going by compass, you see. With the metal you were carrying and everything else your compass was no good. But it was a star-light night. We got the north star over the left shoulder, and we followed the north star and we struck within 100 yards of that bridge.

ROSS, Alex.:
28th

So, on a pitch black night and a little rain, we went down that slope in the darkness, undetected, rushed the canal, captured it, and across, then right through to Cambrai. With the 3rd Division on the right we advanced through Cambrai, cleared it out, and reached the north.

McKNIGHT, G.:
26th

When we got round to the back of Cambrai it was morning and the Germans didn't know we were even around there. We got around right behind them and we got a lot of prisoners out of Cambrai.

OLIVER, Doug.:
18th

And then they cut Cambrai off from the north, and the Germans fell back, and Cambrai was all on fire. You could see Cambrai burning for days before you ever got near, the fires the Germans had started.

McCORRY, J.:
25th

I was through Cambrai early that morning. The fires was still burning but there was hardly anybody around, not even the enemy. Well, we went in the tail-end, you see. Cambrai was pretty well smashed to pieces before we got there. When we went over it was just mopping up. Just walked in like you'd walk down the Main Street, but no people. It was very very quiet. All you could hear was the crack and banging of the artillery, do you see, and the fires burning. Pretty sight to see it burning, pretty sight. Oh, pretty sight.

OLIVER, Doug.:
18th

I had to go down to make contact patrol. Went into Cambrai and there was a wild rush of horses and things came out of an alley there and we thought it was the German Cavalry and we almost opened up with the Lewis gun that we had with us, and they were just wild horses that the Germans had left there and were running through the flames, as horses, you know, they become very upset and stampede with flames burning around them.

NARRATOR:

With Cambrai in Canadian hands the attack swept on to the northeast, toward the village of Iwuy. German resistance had all but vanished and so rapid was the enemy's withdrawal that our mobile forces were sent forward to overtake and engage. The Motor Machine Guns, the Cyclists and the Light Horse went into action.

HAZLITT, T.A.:
M.M.G.

I happened to be in this cavalry charge in front of Cambrai. Old Colonel Lebnard, he was a cavalryman and he'd never seen cavalry in action. He wrote out a message and gave it to me and told me to take it down to the Major in charge of the two squadrons. I took it down and when the Major read it he said, "Has the old man gone nuts?" I said, "I don't know, what does he want?" "We're to charge." I said, "I guess he wants to see a cavalry charge. He's up on the side of the hill up there." He said, "I guess that's all

(CONT)

SHIELDS, T.T.:
PPCLI

Now when the break-through came it was on our right over towards Arras. We were almost directly in front of Lens, and I would say that there was not much panic. As a matter of fact, I would say there was none. You see, an infantryman in the First War in trench warfare he didn't know too much about what was going on around him. You knew your own little area of a hundred yards on each side of you. You knew what was front of you. That was your duty to know what was out in front of you but otherwise you didn't know much, so that I would say there was no panic, there was no uneasiness. The morning that their attack opened the gas alarm went so we had to put on our gas masks and we wore our gas masks for about four hours. We knew that there was a big bombardment going on over on our right but it wasn't until later on that we learned what that bombardment was and the gas that we were getting was the down-wind gas from the German bombardment, you see, from the gas shells they were using.

O'NEILL, Joe:
19th

On the 21st of March the Hun broke through at both the north and the south end of Vimy Ridge. They did not attack Vimy itself for the simple reason that during the winter of '17 - '18 General Currie had fortified Vimy Ridge to the point that it was impossible for the Hun to take it. The Germans didn't bother trying to even fire a shot on Vimy Ridge itself, but concentrated on the north and south.

NARRATOR:

But to stand on Vimy and watch the enemy sweep by on both your flanks was not the happiest of prospects.

ODLUM, V.W.:
11th Inf.Bgde.

Where it first broke that did disturb us to a degree. It was an anxious moment to see them coming, what looked as if they were going to be, behind us.

ROSS, Alex.:
27th

We expected it but we were shocked at the advances they made. They were so spectacular as compared to anything that we had experienced before that we just couldn't understand it.

When you heard of advances of ten or twelve miles a day why it was incredible. That we couldn't understand.

AVISON, D.J.:(cont) half hour something happened to me. I don't know what it was, and I got up and I went along the line and I said, "All those who can move," I says, "get out." And we ran across this place to a little house that was over there. So we got all the men out there and then we had to assemble and attack Iwuy, which we did and that's one of the reasons I got a couple of little decorations. I got the DCM and the Military Medal both in the same action. What I was going to say was that that was, whatever the hell it was, for that half hour, that was the only time all the time I was in the front line that I wasn't like everybody else, if he was honest. Scared stiff. Because you never knew what the hell was going to happen. When we got up to Iwuy again I was just back as I was. You had to do the job but you were still scared.

OLIVER, Doug.:
18th

On the 11th the 20th and the 21st Battalion jumped off that morning to press towards the little village of Avesnes-le-Sec to the right of Iwuy, and half an hour later we could see troops coming back over the skyline. They were 20th and the 21st falling back. I had a very talkative batman with me and while we were watching these fellows coming back like that and wondering what in the world had happened, this batman said, "My God, look at them houses moving." We looked and here was our first sight of German tanks bearing down on us from our right flank and I would imagine that is the only occasion in the First War where German tanks were used against Canadian troops.

BAXTER, James:
16th

We had taken off at dawn and we overrun all their first positions and we were really going on unopposed until these tanks emerged from this small wood and then, of course, the boys began to pour back. You can't blame them at all. They were defenceless against them.

OLIVER, Doug.:
18th

Now mind you what they were trying to do, they were just holding up to get this rolling stock across the canals from the north and the south, you see, of Cambrai, and when we would fall back they'd just turn around with these tanks and away they'd back up towards the village of Avesnes-le-Sec and then we'd just jump out and chase them again.

NARRATOR:

On the same day that the city of Cambrai fell to the Canadian Corps, the Canadian Cavalry Brigade was fighting its way forward to the south with General Rawlinson's 4th British Army. It advanced 8 miles, capturing 400 prisoners and disrupting the enemy's retreat.

HAIG, R.F.:

Fort Garry Horse

I was riding as forward patrol for "C" Squadron and we came over a rise and started to ride down, and down below we could see a small stream, and we came under very heavy machine gun fire. Fortunately, on my right, there was some good cover, and we took to the cover, and my sergeant and I went out forward a bit to try and find out where these machine guns were, because at that moment we did not know and we couldn't find them. They stopped firing as soon as we got out of sight so we waited a little while, and just then one of our observation planes came over and he flew very low and of course the planes in those days they just looked like a couple of apple boxes with a couple of wings, you know, and the pilot, I could see him. He put his arms out and he pointed, so my sergeant said, "Well", he said, "I guess that's where they are", and we got our field glasses on and we then were able to spot them, and they were a bunch of Germans, and we picked out five machine guns. It was a tough spot because there was no way of getting at them, except we had to come absolutely straight out from cover.

STRACHAN, Marcus:

Fort Garry Horse

We were on the crest of a hill, and in front of us was a country badly cut up with fences and hedges and wire and nests of machine gunners at the foot of the hedges. And I got the order at three in the afternoon to attack the machine gunners in the hedge bottom, at the foot of the hill where they had taken up a position to get us on the skyline. That was a mistake on their part. They shouldn't have done that, but it helped us because we could lay out our plan and mobilize in cover, then all we had to do was to breast the skyline and come down on them quickly. Which we did.

HAIG, R.F.:
Fort Garry Horse

We rode, as far as I could judge, approximately a thousand yards, and we drove straight down at them with the usual shouts that you do with drawn swords. Of course, it's rather terrifying you know. And when we got there one man was still firing his gun and we captured the five machine guns. We dismounted and disarmed the prisoners. We got forty-six prisoners right there. And then we came under shell fire from a battery of light guns that were concealed, apparently, behind another ridge, and they didn't give a hoot whether they killed their own men or not. They just let loose. My horse was killed and several others were badly wounded, but fortunately there was only one man that was lightly wounded with shrapnel. That was all.

STRACHAN, Marcus:
Fort Garry Horse

Our action was fast and successful and we proceeded to attack other smaller lightly defended positions until we finally captured the village of Reumont. We took up a position in the cemetery there and that point is where the regiment officially ended its actual fighting.

NARRATOR:

With the eventual capture of Iwuy by the 6th Brigade, the Cambrai operations were completed. The Canadians handed over to the British Second Corps at 5.00 P.M. on 11th October. Since the 26th August they had fought forward twenty-three miles against unceasing German resistance. General Clark sums it up.

CLARK, J.A.:
7th Bgde.

There is no question in my mind but that the crossing of the Canal du Nord, the capture of Bourlon Wood and of Cambrai was the bitterest and hardest fought battle in the history of the First War. By winning those battles the defending power of the Germany Army was broken.

NARRATOR:

When, after a brief rest, the Canadians resumed their forward thrust on 17th October, it was in pursuit of an enemy withdrawing along their whole twenty mile front. The Engineers were among the first to discover that the Germans were in retreat.

POPE, M.A.:
Engineers

There was a Colonel Trotter commanding our 11th Battalion, and I remember we said to each other that the front was too quiet, we'd better go up and see because we'd have to put bridges over the canals if anything happens. It's the Sensée Canal. So he and I went up to a village right on the Canal, went through the village, in one door and out the other of the houses. Trotter and I went up to the attic, pushed out a tile and looked down. We could see where the main road went over the Canal, the bridge blown of course, and we said, "This front is too quiet. It's an unearthly quiet. There's a queer feel to this situation." We went back to lunch and at lunch we heard that the Germans had pulled out and the boys were going across so I suppose they went over on bales of this or assault bridges or whatnot, and that night we put in the pontoon bridge and then we got the rush advance forward through Denain right to Valenciennes.

ROSS, Alex.:
28th

We discovered that they had suddenly disappeared and we followed them up and they went back very quickly, right back to Valenciennes.

JACOBS, A.G.:
LSHG

The hole had been made and we were actually amongst civilians. I was going forward with the message to Canadian Brigade and I'm going up a road behind the German first and second line and I met an old man and an old woman, very old. They were pushing a perambulator. There was shelling going on. I took my message and I came back by the same road. The old man was dead beside the road - shell. The old lady was a hundred and fifty yards down the road still going along in a dazed condition pushing her perambulator. It was the saddest thing I saw in the war. At that moment when I saw her I thought it was a pity the shell hadn't landed between them.

ROBERTSON, R.S.:
16th

The largest town that fell to the 16th was a place called Somain, a lovely little town, and when we had gone through it the people had come up in flocks throwing flowers on us. They thought so much of the troops who had relieved them because those people had been four years under the Germans, you see, so it was quite an experience.

MACKLIN, W.H.S.:
19th

Although there were times when we were extremely weary and very exhausted, we were nearly all very young people and we recovered from those things and the thing that began to raise the morale as much as anything was the entry of our troops into inhabited villages and towns. You have to remember that we had been fighting for nearly a year in a devastated area where every village had been destroyed and there were no civilians at all. The city of Arras with forty thousand people had its population reduced to three or four hundred who were living in cellars with the rats. It was a ghost city and there were no people in it to speak of. But when we got forward beyond the city of Douai in the general direction say, of Valenciennes, there we found cities like Denain with thousands of people in them and these people came out and greeted us with the greatest possible enthusiasm and this in itself was a great raiser of morale. The soldier felt that, after all, they've been telling us that we're fighting for freedom and here are the people that we are liberating and the very reception that the soldier got was enough to convince him that this was, in fact, true.

PEARCE, L.F.:
M.G.Corps

We came to Denain and were greeted there by the people who were weeping and cheering and it was arranged that a service would be held in the Cathedral and General Watson, the Divisional Commander, would be there, Sir Arthur Currie and the Prince of Wales, and they got the village Band who had had their brass instruments buried for the past several years and they resurrected these brass instruments and what they lacked in practise, they showed in enthusiasm. I've never seen anything so impressive as that service in that crowded Cathedral, with the people weeping and happy and three figures up there in front. The Prince of Wales, a little small short slim chap. Big Sir Arthur Currie on the right and David Watson on the left.

NARRATOR:(CONT)

stalemate. But there are those who believe that within the limitations set by that stalemate there were opportunities for manoeuvre of which no use was made. Among them is Major General Worthington.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

If you are going to be attacked a great way of upsetting an enemy's plan is to retire just before the attack. The Germans did that in 1917, and the British were ready to make that huge attack and then suddenly we didn't hit anybody. It wasn't there. One of the things that seems to have grown into warfare in the first war was the refusal to manoeuvre, give ground at all. The great Generals of the past didn't give a hoot about that. Wellington, one of his greatest things was that he would fight and then he would give ground. He would retire for miles and miles and the French would follow him, and then he would go back at them and drive them back again. Marlborough did the same thing and all the great Generals. They cared nothing about ground, as such.

NARRATOR:

Even among the Generals of the First World War there were some who remembered this classic military maxim. They got short shrift from their peers and among them was a man named Smith-Dorrien.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.G. Corps

Smith-Dorrien was an outstandingly good General, and when he in his appreciation said that the British should move out of the Ypres Salient about the time when it was evident the Germans were going to use this gas, they thought he'd lost his nerve, and they removed him. And everything he said in his appreciation was right. Had the British moved back, given up the Salient, which was no damn good to anyone except a good big graveyard, the Germans' attack would have been up in the air.

STEWART, J.S.:(cont) hadn't a chance. We took that high ground and hill and then all the 4th Division had to do was just make a little turn to the left and they got in behind Valenciennes and the enemy had to draw all their forces back or they would have been cut off and that is how we eventually got over the L'Escaut Canal. I know of no greater example where there were such great results obtained with the loss of so few men, and that was the epic artillery battle of the war.

HEWITT, T.A.:
46th

We were strong and we had our units organized properly and we went right up to the edge of Valenciennes. We killed 800 of them and we took 1400 prisoners.

MARSHALL, W.M.:
46th

That's where Hughie Cairns got a V.C. He killed 51 men himself. He was a peculiar man. He wouldn't take any responsibility for a bunch of men but he could take apart and put together again a Lewis gun blind-folded. They used to have competitions throughout the Division and Hughie Cairns could beat everybody. Well he was out with a few men this time and they came to a wall and they scouted around and found an opening and here was a whole bunch of Germans all lined up inside the wall ready to get moving backwards and he turned his machine gun on them and I wrote up his V.C. citation. He personally killed 51 Germans. It was a slaughter, but they got him in the end. You know there's a monument to Hugh Cairns in one of the parks in Saskatoon. It shows him with a football at his foot. He was a very good professional soccer player.

NARRATOR:

Cairns was the last Canadian to earn a V.C. in that war and Valenciennes was the last set-piece attack mounted by the Corps.

The last ten of the one hundred days saw the German Army in a steady retreat.

McCORRY, J.:
25th

That was more or less a steady steady advance. Heinie was pulling out and all he was leaving, you see, was a few snipers scattered around but they were deadly. But now you take Elouges, November 5th. That was the largest town that we drove through before the armistice and that was a town of about the size of Liverpool

(CONT)

McCORRY, J.:
25th

here. When we jumped in the morning even the stores was still open, and women in the houses baking bread, see, and when we went through my job was to search the houses and see if we could locate these snipers. We only got about halfway through when I got hit.

KILPATRICK, G.:
42nd

They halted every now and then and put up some very stiff opposition but by and large they were running and our job was to keep pressing them, which we did. The speed of our advance was to us staggering. When you consider the Somme, we'd lose a hundred men to gain 50 yards. When we cleaned up the Bois de Raismes. we made seven thousand yards in one day. That's the speed of our advance and it meant that the companies were really operating independantly.

NARRATOR:

Some of the batteries of the Motor Machine Gun Brigade were operating very independently.

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
M.M.G.

I think the most exciting day I had was the day I got through behind the enemy's lines with my motor vehicles. I kicked off, following up the advance early in the morning just before daylight, and the road had been cratered. The enemy were falling back and blowing up the road and I had to find a way around. And I got into a trail through a woods, and by winding my way around I got through and came out not knowing exactly where I was, very close to a village and a very strange thing, we met an English woman, married to a Frenchman. They had a place there and she told us where the enemy's outposts were. We were behind the enemy's lines you see, and we were completely isolated, so I went on to a bridge which were supposed to be objectives, and got the bridge, and then went on to Mons, to Valenciennes Road, and we had a lot of fighting that day and things got very bad. They drove me back and I got the bridge and around the bridge were some houses and we got into these houses and we were fighting then. No sign of our own troops at all. And then we got shot up by the Air Force. They came and dropped some bombs on us, our own people.

Things were going very badly and we could see the enemy all around us and they were retiring. And late in the afternoon I could see a line of men, at least 1,000 men, advancing in open order about 1,000 yards away, and they were starting to move right straight at

(CONT)

WORTHINGTON, F.F.:
(CONT)

us, and that was it, the enemy had us. I knew that it would be a determined attack coming on and I watched, you know, thinking what the hell will I do. And there was a bit of sun came up, it had been raining during the day and then the sun came out and, watching this thing when the sun came up, I saw a flash, a sparkle which I knew was a shiny bayonet or a brass button. And the only people who had had shiny bayonets or brass buttons were the British or the Canadians. I never could forget that, you see, spit and polish! When I saw that I knew I was all right, 'cause these fellows were coming on. They came up and strangely enough they opened fire on us, you see. Naturally, they would. And I got a big bed sheet, I scurried around and run the bed sheet up as a white flag. And when they came up they still wouldn't believe it. Here we were eight or ten miles back on the lines, you see. And they never could figure how we got in there with armoured cars and lorries. They saw all our stuff around there. "How in the hell did you get here?", because they'd been fighting the whole way up all day long.

SHEPPARD, H.L.:
Arty.

We would move and be in action and then move and be in action. Sometimes we'd move twice in one day and sometimes we'd be hung up maybe for two or three days but we were moving almost constantly with our guns and firing, and the sort of things that we were running into then was where the Germans would set a mine under a crossroad and blow it up and then we would have to fill it in or bridge it to get our guns across; but we didn't have too much trouble going ahead, and stop a little while and go ahead again.

SIVERTZ, Gus:
2 C.M.R.

We were welcomed you know, tremendously - en route now. They gave us everything, everywhere. And wherever we stopped we were billeted mostly in beds. We had a strange little incident at Quiebrechain. It was debated for weeks after. Nine civilians were murdered by the Germans, mostly elderly men and women. One girl and two or three men, maybe middle-aged. It was useless. There was no purpose in it at all. And some of our men just went berserk. One was a stretcher bearer who went around to the houses and the people would sort of give him the sign that the Germans were in the cellar so he would lift up the trap door, and he had a lead-loaded crop, and he would say, "Come up out of that, one at a time." As they came up each one just got it behind the ear. The man was not open to logical reason. He knew that you didn't do that, you didn't kill prisoners, but he wasn't killing prisoners, he was killing Germans.

PAGE, James:
42nd

We were in Jemappes on the 10th. That was three kilometers from Mons and during the day there was a German who had been hiding in the cellar down below there. He'd apparently stayed behind when they pulled out and some Belgians went down and they dug him out. When I happened to pass there there was a big Belgian and he was trying to cut this Jerry's head off with a big blunt knife, so I rushed in and I slugged this Belgian, you know, and got a hold of the Jerry and took my field dressing and put it on him. If he'd had a sharp knife he'd have had his head off before I got him but the knife wasn't very sharp. But he had him cut, though, right across the back of the neck, holding his head down and sawing away with this knife when I clubbed him. And then there was a crowd of Belgians got round and they were going to go for me too, these Belgians, they were going to murder me, but I managed to get a crowd and we escorted this fellow down to the POW camp.

KILPATRICK, G.:
42nd

About the second week in November we were drawing near to Mons. Now Mons is a very old city and in the ancient days it was a walled city with a moat. The wall's gone and there are beautiful boulevards instead. The moat is gone and has been transformed into some very charming canals which are not so charming if they are guarded by machine guns.

GIANELLI, Victor:
PPCLI

We had our first real hold-up at one of the canals and I remember distinctly a machine gun, a German machine gun, being imbedded in a pit at a sharp turn in one of the roads and this gave us a great deal of trouble because we couldn't make this turn and it was, otherwise, pretty well sheltered but the first artillery piece that we saw in the last five days came up on that occasion, an eighteen-pounder, and Jim McDonald, recently the Member of Parliament, was in command of that gun. He was Major in the Third Division Artillery at that time and he surveyed the situation and tore down a board in a typically Canadian board fence, put the gun through the hole and fired point-blank at the machine gun pit and destroyed it with one shot so it was a rather singular event that one shot from an eighteen-pounder was able to allow the whole regiment to advance another quarter of a mile, but that's exactly what occurred.

HIGGINS, D.C.:
4 Div. Arty.

We knew, at that time, that you could not control your Battery with any accuracy, for two reasons: One, that the guns were wearing very rapidly and very badly, and the other, that the ammunition was a bloody mess. For example, at that time we were getting 45 howitzer ammunition with three types of fuses, three weights, two different driving bands and three different charges. It was being brought up and dumped at night by the drivers who had packsacks over their saddles, and frequently it got wet and most of the time the cardboard top came off the charge, allowing the moisture to get into the propellant.

NARRATOR:

There was a great mass of artillery support available by now but it still lacked the pinpoint accuracy that would come only with training, greater experience and more reliable ammunition.

The infantry, too, had a lot to learn about how best to take advantage of a creeping barrage.

RUSSENHOLT, E.:
44th

We hadn't yet mastered the technique of getting ideas over to masses of men. I remember how they tried to tell us about a barrage of artillery fire, and a great number of the boys thought that the shells were so thick they'd prevent the enemy's bullets from coming through, and this sort of thing. The training was very faulty.

SMITH, Sid.:
18th

I would say that the German army at that time were probably better trained than our men but our men hadn't been regimented like the German army and I think that one fact made our boys think for themselves and do the right thing. I remember one instance particularly on the Somme. The Sergeant of my Platoon he kept calling us to come on, come on, and I yelled to him and I said, "Sergeant Stone," I said, "if you walk into that barrage you're certainly going to be killed." You had to stay within a certain distance of that barrage otherwise you'd had it. Now he was too anxious, and he walked right into it and just dropped. I've had several lads tell me, and it's a funny thing, I didn't realize that I was doing this, but several la

(CONT)

ODLUM, V.W.:
11th Inf.Bgde.

I know there is a tendency to call it costly. I doubt if, in view of what was being accomplished, it should be called costly. The ice was breaking. It was our duty to shove that ice through. Weakness on our side might have caused them to stick it out a little longer.

SHIELDS, T.T.:
PPCLI

In spite of the fact that it seemed that the Canadian Corps was over-worked in the last hundred days, that they had been given more than their share to do, I would say that there was a sense of satisfaction among the men in spite of the casualties. In spite of the rough going there was an elation among the men. There was a tremendous sensation that finally we had a chance to do something, and we were doing it.

McNAB, Alan:
Cyclists

We were on top of the ground. We were away from the muck and the mud, and while our casualty rate went up drastically after that, I don't think anybody would rather have ever gone back to the trenches if they were given a choice.

MACKLIN, W.H.S.:
19th

And when a soldier thinks that his army is better than anybody else's and his Division is better than the other Divisions and his Platoon's the best in the Battalion, well obviously he's the best soldier in the world and that's it. His morale must be high. Everybody believed that the Canadian Corps, all by itself and single-handed, was actually flogging the hide off the German Army and winning the war, and you could see it.

NARRATOR:

Next week, with the bells of the Town Hall ringing out "O CANADA"; with the bands playing and the burghers of this ancient Belgian City cheering in a delirium of joy, the Canadians march, triumphant, into Mons.
Next week: "VICTORY".

ANNOUNCER:

The first-person accounts of WORLD WAR I were researched, arranged and edited under the direction of Frank Lalor.

The series, originated by A.E. Powley, is written,

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, "FLANDERS' FIELDS", Chapter 16, "VICTORY".

NARRATOR: On the 9th November 1918, two days before the unexpected end, the 2nd and 3rd Divisions of the Canadian Corps had reached the outskirts of Mons where it had all begun. For it was here at Mons, in King Albert's "Brave Little Belgium" that the small professional force, described in Kaiser Wilhelm's most quoted words as "That contemptible little Army" which Great Britain had rushed to France in August 1914 had had its first encounter with the highly refined end-product of German militarism; a conquering German Army that had smashed its way in triumph across the Belgian frontier to press relentlessly forward till it neared the gates of Paris.

Now, fifty-one months later, the tide of German fortune, at the flood in August of '14, was at the neap. Now, a beaten German Army stood in desperation to stem the flow of a British advance.

Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry were the first to feel their way down Mons' outlying streets.

GIANELLI, Victor:
PPCLI

We entered the outskirts of Mons on the 9th of November, and that's where we met our first severe resistance in four or five days. The Germans were in every house, making it very hot for us.

HUTCHISON, P.P.:
42nd

I was with the 42nd Canadian Battalion, the Royal Highlanders from Montreal, as a Junior Officer commanding a platoon. We were following up the two front battalions of the 7th Brigade. The R.C.R.'s and the Patricias were doing the actual advance on Mons and, during the morning of November the 10th, we were ordered forward to go through them. We pushed ahead and found the Patricias in a suburb of Mons, a village by the name of Ghlin.

PAGE, James:
42nd

Currie's idea was that the Princess Pats would take Mons, but they had been on the go so long that they were practically all in, and you know troops need their rest. They were just about finished.

NARRATOR:

Although the Pats were officially relieved, number 4 Company, perhaps with a sense of history, asked Brigadier-General Clark's permission to remain. It was granted.

GIANELLI, Victor:
PPCLI

We believe that #4 Company had had a tip-off of some kind that the Armistice was coming within a few hours and therefore they made an effort to stay in with the 42nd until the Armistice was celebrated. I think it was very much in the minds of the Patricias to be in at the end because they were the first Canadian unit to be engaged in the First World War.

NARRATOR:

The rumor factory was working double shifts. Not many soldiers were buying the output. They'd heard those yarns before. But the Pats had some reason to take them seriously.

GIANELLI, Victor:
PPCLI

I think it was the 8th, I'm not certain, that we were cautioned that a German staff car would approach our lines and that we should permit it to go through without interruption. And an hour or two later this happened. The car approached with white flag flying and officers sitting prim and erect as the usual fashion was

(CONT)

GIANELLI, Victor:
(CONT)

for German officers to sit. They approached and went through our lines without any demonstration of any kind. It was unique there's no question about that, and we were having our own way so well that we suspected that it could be peace discussions of some kind.

NARRATOR:

Several thousand Canadians in German P.O.W. Camps had even better reasons to believe the war was ending.

SEAMAN, Eric:
3rd

There had been talk of a revolt of the German Navy, you see. They had got orders to go out and do or die, but they took their officers and threw them in the sea, revolted and swarmed all down from Kiel, Cookshaven, Wilhaven, and all those places and they formed what they called the Rat, the Soldiers and Workers Council. The 8th of November, I remember particularly, we ran slap into a roving band of these sailors who had come down, deserted their ships and so on, and any German officers they were meeting they were really giving him a rough time. One particular big overbearing so and so whom we had reason to hate, he started shouting in the usual Prussian manner to these sailors, but anyway, someone took a poke at this officer and knocked him flat on his back. From somewhere they had commandeered a baby carriage and they picked him up bodily and jammed him right into this bloody baby carriage, you see, and that was the sight of my life, this same blighter who had got us in trouble was being pushed along, and he was jeered and spat upon by his own men. By the time we got back to camp with all this news the camp commandant himself, the chap whom we had hated, he had fallen in a fit of frenzy, cursing at us and he had burst a blood vessel and we all cheered when they carried him off.

NARRATOR:

But the front line soldier was a hard man to convince. He wore scepticism like a long-service-medal.

DUNLOP, W.A.:
116th

On November the 10th we were supposed to follow behind an attack by the 7th Brigade, and I'll always remember one of our officers coming back from leave that night and saying, "Have you fellows heard anything about an armistice?" Well we laughed, we said, "An armistice? No, you'll be fighting here at this time next year." "Well," he says, "down around the base they're all talking about an armistice."

HUTCHISON, P.P.:

42nd

Well during the 10th the story went the rounds that a couple of days before the Prince of Wales had marched along beside the 49th battalion of our brigade and told the men to keep their heads down till Sunday, when it would all be over. A little later Mr. Livesay, the War Correspondent, came up the road and asked me where the front line was. I told him he was in the front line and he explained that the Armistice was to commence the next day, and that he had never been in the front line and wanted to be in the front line before the war ended. Some of my men heard him telling this story and they simply laughed, as we were being shelled at the time.

NARRATOR:

The disbelief held on, unshaken through the night of the 10th to the 11th.

OLIVER, Doug.:

18th

I was spending the night of the 10th and 11th of November with a sick fellow officer of mine who was burning up with fever, and he wouldn't be paraded to the Doctor, and so when he lumbered off upstairs all by his own there was nothing else I could do but to follow him up there, and then I crawled up on the bed and stretched out a bit myself, and the first thing I knew I came to with a start and here was Mac, my fellow officer, sitting straight up in bed and he had me by my wrist and he says, "Doc, Doc, listen!" And I listened, and all about me was the silence of the tomb. It was eerie. It just had you gripped. "Listen," Mac said. And I listened. There wasn't a sound of a falling bomb. There was no drone of planes. There was no rattle of machine guns. I couldn't hear even a rifle shot. And, just when I was trying to size up what was happening a rooster crowed, and then Mac leaned over and grabbed me by the arm again. He says, "Listen, the damn war is over." And I said, "You're nuts," and I shoved him down on the pillow and held him there, and gradually he went back into slumber again and I said, "Well, we'll have to get this kid to the Doc in the morning."

LITTLE, G.:

PPCLI

We had no appreciation at all of the fact that the whole German front was crumbling. It certainly seemed to be crumbling in front of us, but that didn't indicate to us in any way that the war was about to come to a conclusion. I suppose you don't think it's come to a conclusion too readily if you're still getting sniped at.

NARRATOR:

Troops of the 4th Brigade, moving across the fields south of the City of Mons, implementing a plan of encirclement, encountered a good deal more than sniping on the 10th November.

O'NEILL, Joe:
19th

The Germans were fighting that morning from one position to another as well as any troops we had ever seen in the old line days. They were also supported by a peculiar fact that this Mons had been a machine gun school. All these fellows had been trained over this ground. We found machine gun bullets coming from cabbage patches, housetops, all sorts of fancy positions, and it certainly made a pretty tough proposition.

NARRATOR:

Directly in front of Mons the 7th Brigade moved forward gingerly.

HUTCHISON, P.P.:
42nd

Our instructions were to keep pushing the Germans back but to avoid heavy casualties or getting into any real scrap I got my men into the houses along the streets and we kept prodding forward but, to avoid casualties, did not make too serious an attack. During the afternoon Captain Home of the R.C.R.'s, who were over on our left, came to see me and we arranged that I would put out some light machine guns after dark between his Company attached to our Battalion for the show and my own Platoon.

HOME, W.J.:
R.C.R.

I was commanding a Company then and my Company was attached to the Black Watch for that operation, the 42nd Black Watch. I relieved a Company of the Princess Patricias on the morning of the 10th of November, just on the outskirts of Mons and later on that day we tried to get in but I got definite written instructions from Colonel Ewing not to attempt to get in until about three-thirty in the morning. It was expected that the Germans were going to withdraw.

NARRATOR:

But with the coming on of night there was still no sign of the Germans pulling out. Brigadier General Clark discussed the situation with his Battalion Commanders.

CLARK, J.A.:
7th Bgde.

The situation looked so serious that we concluded that it would require a set piece attack in the morning to capture the city.

After they left my room I went to bed and went to sleep promptly. I was awakened by a telephone buzzing. The voice on the other end said, "I am now at map location so and so", and I looked at my map and I said, "You're in Mons. You've spoiled our attack on Mons in the morning, but I'm delighted," and I told him what to do. That was Captain Graftey of the 42nd Battalion whose "D" Company had entered Mons as we had hoped they might.

HUTCHISON, P.P.:
42nd

After dark we received a runner from our Company Headquarters letting us know that "D" Company of our Battalion had managed to push into the outskirts of the city. We then pushed forward. The bridge was down over the canal between us and the city. We built a temporary foot-bridge and managed to get in.

NARRATOR:

North of the 42nd the Royal Canadian Regiment made the third entry of the night. Lieutenant W. Martin King commanded the leading Platoon.

KING, W. Martin:
R.C.R.

Approximately I would say at two o'clock in the morning we went over the bridge. The platoon sergeant and I tripped over a rope or a wire and our fear was that the bridge was mined. So we put a man on so that everybody stepped over, and I might say that the engineers, on exploring it the next day, found that the bridge was mined, but either it had short-circuited or one contact was missing. From all intents and purposes we were in the city.

NARRATOR:

They felt their way cross-town in the dark and came to the Grand Place, the central square of Mons in front of the Hotel de Ville, the City Hall.

KING, W. Martin:
R.C.R.

There I encountered the Prefect of Police, and he said, "Would you come in and sign the Golden Book of this city?" He just appeared out of the dark somewhere, and I said, "Yes, but it'll have to be quick." So I signed this book - in the usual French fashion, kissing one another on the cheeks and so on. Then I went out and got our platoon situated on the other side of the city.

NARRATOR:

There are many illustrious names on that very famous page in "The Golden Book of Mons" but the name of a young Canadian Lieutenant, commanding a fighting platoon leads all the rest. It will stand forever above the Generals, the Statesmen and the Kings.

HUTCHISON, P.P.:
42nd

As we went through the streets of the city my men ran their bayoneted rifles along the grills of the cellar windows of the houses. The city was very quiet at this point, the shelling and machine gunning from the enemy had stopped some time before and eventually, as a result of the bayonets on the grilled windows of the cellars, the citizens of Mons streamed out calling "Les Americans." We explained that we were the Canadians and there was, of course, great excitement on the street.

HOME, W.J.:
R.C.R.

We moved in at 3.30 on a frontage of two or three hundred yards, and we'd no sooner got into the outskirts with daylight just breaking when windows opened up, the Belgian flags came out, the people streamed out into the streets with cake and brandy and there was no firing. The Germans had fallen back.

ACKERLEY, P.:

42nd

I went past Mons. I was detailed to go out down the Petit Nimy, down the Petit Nimy Road, in the early hours of the morning and established a post there. There was apparently no sign of any Germans so I decided to go down the main street to inquire where I could find out where the Germans were, but on the way up this street we heard a phonograph playing in an estaminet that had opened for business and that tune that they were playing was The British Grenadiers, and I couldn't believe my ears. Well I fell into the hands of some civilian who insisted upon parading me to the Mayor of Petit Nimy who was bedridden, and he greeted us in the name of Belgium and made a little speech and they sent out for a man who could speak English, and he told me that the Germans had fallen back across the canal. They hadn't blown up the canal, which was the information I wanted.

NARRATOR:

The 2nd Division which was sweeping on south of the city was now turning north to link up with the 3rd Division and come at it from the rear.

MACKLIN, W.H.S.:

19th

My Brigade had been given an objective which was one of the suburbs of Mons, a place called Hyon, and it's true that my particular platoon got lost and actually entered the city and went through the city in the early hours of the morning.

NARRATOR:

They came very close to being trapped by retreating German forces but were warned and sheltered by Belgian civilians.

O'NEILL, Joe:

19th

The Belgians put our boys in the doors and the windows of houses, and there they stood and had a grandstand view of the German Army moving out the road straight in front of them. The main part of the Company advanced and eventually we took our position in the actual ditch that was used by the Royal Irish in 1914 when they first met the Hun, and we stayed right there because we had been relieved by the 28th.

NARRATOR:

While the city was being cleared first news of the coming Armistice arrived at the senior Headquarters. The 3rd Division got the word at 6.40 A.M. They passed it on at once to Brigadier General Clark.

CLARK, J.A.:
7th Bgde.

I was awakened by my Staff Captain and he showed me this telegram "Hostilities will cease at eleven hours November 11th. Troops will stand fast on the line reached at that hour, which will be reported to Corps Headquarters. Defensive precautions will be maintained. There will be no intercourse of any description with the enemy. Further instructions follow."

NARRATOR:

Brigadier General Alexander Ross of the 6th Brigade who was even then relieving the 4th Brigade to the east of Mons got his signal at that same time.

ROSS, Alex.:
28th

I got the word on the way in. I stopped at 4th Brigade Headquarters. They had relayed the message from Marshal Foch right down through all the channels, and that message I simply passed on with a note to my Battalion Commanders not to take any unnecessary risks but pointing out to them that the area in which they were operating was practically uninhabited and if they happened to stop on that line they would probably stop without any habitation, which gave them some incentive to endeavor to reach the two very comfortable villages that lay ahead of them, which they did, and promptly by the eleventh hour they were on that line of the canal which we had ordered and they had their own villages and were very warmly received by the population and were very happy. We were four miles in front of Mons, which was farther than any troops engaged.

MACKLIN, W.H.S.:
19th

I ended up in this village of Hyon in the courtyard of a large house and there was a squadron of British Cavalry who had been there in this same spot in 1914. There was also in a fork of a tree above our heads a

(CONT)

MACKLIN, W.H.S.:
(CONT)

little German field gun shell sticking in the tree which had been fired there in 1914 and the inhabitants pointed this out to us. We weren't in the front line any more because the 6th Brigade had gone by and we had been relieved and so we proceeded to get some food and cook it. And while we were doing this one of our fighter aeroplanes, a little Camel aircraft, came and dived over us waving a Union Jack, and shortly thereafter the cavalry unit received an armistice order, and it was received by everybody with the greatest of scepticism.

O'NEILL, Joe:
19th

No one believed it. Eventually, though, we began to wonder whether there was something to it. I saw a staff officer coming up the Mons Namur Road, so I went over and stopped him to find out if there was anything to this because the rumours had been getting stronger. Well he hadn't heard it either so, while we were talking, a runner came along and he told us that it really was true. The war was over.

NARRATOR:

In the back of many minds there was a nasty gnawing little thought....

DUNLOP, W.A.:
116th

I'll always remember the late W.A. Orr making the remark, "Wouldn't it be Hell to be knocked off on the last day?" Well of course we all thought that.

McKAGUE, E.V.:
Cyclist

There was a sergeant of ours who had the DCM and the MM. He came out with the 1st Division and he had gone right through the war. He was a curious fellow and a very courageous fellow and he just couldn't keep down. There was a canal at Mons and at a quarter to eleven in the morning when we were walking along the canal he had to get up and find out what was going on. He was hit with a sniper's bullet and fell in the canal. It was a terrible tragedy.

NARRATOR:

There has always been a heightened feeling of sadness and an added poignancy to the tragedy of the War's last casualties. The lads who almost made it.

Young Private Price of the 28th Battalion was the last Canadian soldier to die on the field of battle.

GOODMURPHY, A.B.:

28th

Major Ross, one of our officers there, told us we were to halt on the bank of this river or canal to wait for further orders. Well just about this time this Price, he came over to me and he said, "What do you think of those houses across the road there?" Well they were brick houses facing us with bricks knocked out. They looked like a wonderful spot to stick a machine gun out of, you know, or a rifle or anything like that, so I said, "I don't like the look of it." Out on this road here we were just sitting ducks. He says, "You know, I think we should go across there and see what's in those houses." So I says, "Fine." So he said, "Let's get a couple of other guys to go across with us." And so we got three other machine gunners and we went across. Well when we got to the bridge on a little knoll or hill off to our right we could see Germans mounting machine guns. No doubt about that. They were mounting machine guns there. How many we didn't know. But we walked across this steel bridge, and all we found in these houses were old Belgian people, and then the machine guns opened up. Oh boy! They knocked bricks off this house and knocked the shingles off and hit this bridge that we had come across. It looked like an emery wheel the way the bullets were ricocheting off that steel, you know. But these was brick houses, you know, and they're pretty substantial. There was a brick fence ran around this first house. So Price said, "Let's go outside and see what's going on outside here." So the two of us went outside, and all of a sudden, bang! One shot came from way up the end of the street, got him right through the back and through the heart, and he fell dead right in my arms there. It was not an accidental shot. It was a sniper like, you know. If there had been two there he'd have got both of us. And I laid him down behind the fence there and went in and got the other boys and told them that he was killed, you know. What's the matter, there's not a sound, no machine guns fired. Everything is quiet, and one of them said, "They'll wait until we start to cross that bridge and then they'll get us then." But we walked across the bridge, no firing, nothing ever fired, and I went right up to Major Ross and told him that Price was killed. Oh gee, did he blow a fuse. "The war's over," he said, "The war's over." "Well," I said, "I can't help that." He said, "What the hell did you go across there for? You had no orders to go across there."

(CONT)

GOODMURPHY, A.B.:
(CONT)

I said, "We went across to see what was in those brick houses there. They looked like good spots for somebody to pick us off there." "Hell of a note," he says "to think that that would happen right when the war's over." We never even thought about the war being over then, you know, and poor old Price he never knew that it was over. He was just doing his job. We didn't always get orders to do everything that we did.

McKAY, J. Keiller:
2 Div. Arty.

The last time I visited Mons my attention was drawn to two small markers in a Military Cemetery. The first is marking the grave of Lieutenant Deace of the Royal Irish Fusiliers who was killed on the 23rd day of August 1914, the day that the troops first met, and the first Victoria Cross in the British Army. And almost side by side is the grave of a young private by the name of Price from Saskatchewan, who was killed on the 11th day of November 1918. Between the opening and closing of those two graves the carnage, the murder, the massacre of troops all the way from Switzerland to the North Sea is overwhelming.

KILPATRICK, G.:
42nd

During the last twenty-four hours we lost eleven men. The Burgomaster asked if the City Fathers might take charge of the funeral and that request was granted. Immediately they turned the old City Hall into a Chapel. The eleven coffins were laid on trestles covered with black palls with silver lining. Hour after hour the citizens passed by and piled the coffins with flowers.

McLEOD, D.W.:
42nd

It was the first time I'd seen a coffin since I went over there. All the boys that were killed were buried in a blanket. So the City of Mons gave every man a decent coffin.

KILPATRICK, G.:
42nd

When it came time for the funeral we moved off, a long procession, headed by the Pipe Band, to the little cemetery that lay outside the city, and there the service, brief but moving, was held. There were two notable speeches given, one by the Burgomaster and one by the Provincial Representative of the Province of Aino in which Mons is situated, and I'd like to read to you the closing words of the Provincial Representative's speech. This is what he said, "Gentlemen of the Canadian Corps we bow, filled with respect and deep feeling before the tomb of your comrades. In so doing we enshrine in our hearts the remembrance of what they were and of what they have done for us."

(CONT)

KILPATRICK, G.:(cont) "At this moment, alas, far beyond the Atlantic there are mothers and fathers, wives and children, lovers, brothers and sisters who await those who live no longer, not knowing as yet that they lie here. Tell them, we beg of you, that this little parcel of Belgian soil is for us the most sacred of all, that it is forever a part of Canadian territory, a precious treasure set like a jewel in the burial ground of our own people."

And so after the prayers and the last post which is one of the most poignant calls that the Army knows the benediction was pronounced and we turned and left them there, not in a corner of a foreign land, but in that parcel of ground deeded to Canada forever.

NARRATOR:

In the years that followed the war the sacred memory of those who gave their lives to capture Mons was perverted into a bitter attack upon Sir Arthur Currie. In the end, backed by the men he'd led, he sued for libel - - - and he won.

PAGE, James:
42nd

They say that Currie threw away a whole lot of lives just for the glory, for the glory of taking Mons before the armistice came in. That's a lot of damn nonsense. We were doing our job the same as we did any other day. The Jerrys was killing our boys back in Jemappes. They were shelling us there, they were shelling everywhere, and why should we just sit back there and be killed? No sir!

HUTCHISON, P.P.:
42nd

I always thought it was a lot of nonsense, this attack on Sir Arthur, and the way the Canadian Corps of all ranks got behind Sir Arthur during that time was simply terrific. Anything from Privates to Major-Generals all wanted to know how they could help. I was one of the witnesses in that Cobourg libel suit. Quite a crowd of us went up from the 42nd and gave evidence. I was on the witness stand about an hour myself. Currie had his orders just like all of us and the orders were to keep pushing the Germans back. We didn't know when they were going to collapse. He was a great soldier and a great Canadian, and to my mind that whole attack on Sir Arthur was disgraceful.

ORMOND, D.M.:
9th Bgde.

Mons was the most important railway centre in that part of Europe and our hope was to get far enough beyond Mons so that it couldn't be reached by medium artillery that nothing under an 8-inch gun could hit it. Well that meant we had to be at least seventy-five hundred yards beyond Mons and that was the reason for speed and for hurry and pushing people out of the way. We had to get out as far as possible and all this criticism of the Corps Commander by people who didn't understand the reason for pressure is so iniquitous.

PERRY, R.G.:
PPCLI

It must be remembered that the British and the Australians and the French were also moving forward right up until 11 o'clock, and it would have been disastrous if we had held back from going into Mons, left the flanks open on both sides so that whatever army or men were to our right or left, they would have had undue casualties.

NARRATOR:

Far from resenting the fact that they were ordered into battle on the 10th and 11th of November there were many who resented the cease-fire; who questioned the wisdom of stopping when the Germans were beaten and running. There are those who question it still.

PAGE, James:
42nd

They should have went in and put Germany where it should have been put and finished the job. Why they were on the run and they couldn't have stood very long and we'd have put them where Mr. Hitler wouldn't have come back in the short time that he did had they taken over Germany that time instead of just going to the outskirts. That was politicians that done that, Wilson and these people. It wasn't the soldiers. It wasn't Foch or the Generals that made that armistice.

NARRATOR:

Nevertheless, the Armistice was made.

How did the soldiers feel as time ticked up to eleven-hundred hours?

HUTCHISON, P.P.:
42nd

Well none of us knew, of course, just exactly what the armistice was or what it meant or whether it was genuine or not, and we had our instructions to take these precautions, and that's why we put out these posts up on the top of this hill. The cavalry were on in front of us quite some distance by then, and they were trying to keep in touch with the Germans, and we had the odd message from them that they were half a mile away and that sort of thing, but we simply watched our step that was all.

JULL, W.K.:
31st

Barney Wood who was commanding "B" Company came up against a detachment of German machine gunners and had worked himself into a position where they could charge, and the men had fixed their bayonets and were going to charge when the signal went up. The church bells all started to ring. You could hear the sound of the guns dying along the front. The German officer in command of this detachment stood up and signalled and the Germans got out of the trench, emptied the water out of their machine guns, marched back in formation across the Canal, and we advanced forward into the village of Havre when the first shift of miners were coming out of the mines. They'd gone down when the Germans were in occupation. The word had got down, of course, and I think they came out earlier than their shift. And there was terrific celebration.

ROSS, Alex.:
28th

I was standing on the slope of this hill. I could see Mons on my left. I could hear the bands playing. I could hear the people cheering and shouting and all the rejoicing in the village behind, but out front it was just dead silence and we really couldn't believe it. That's my reaction. The troops in action and I went up to the front line immediately afterward and there was certainly no elation, no rejoicing, they wanted to go to bed. It was the end and they just couldn't realize it. Came so suddenly.

MITCHELL, C.H.:
19th

It was sprung on us so suddenly we couldn't realize it. We kind of stood around and didn't know what to make of it. The Armistice was on and the war was over and you couldn't realize that anything like that could happen. You were hypnotized. You just couldn't realize anything. I mean you were wondering what it was all about. You were fighting the day before, and men being killed, and the next day the war is all finished. Things went through your mind like that. I was impossible to realize that the war was over.

BREWER, H.G.:

14th

I suppose it was a let-down feeling, a sort of a sadness rather than elation. That night I think we tried to celebrate but it wasn't a spontaneous affair, it was an effort to celebrate.

NARRATOR:

The cavalry brigade, now with the 4th British Army, felt much the same reaction.

MacKAY, D.R.L

LSHG

I can't remember the town where they sounded the "Cease fire", but we pulled into a big farm yard. It was starting to rain then. We was all wondering what's going to happen, so all of a sudden we heard "Fall in the trumpeters." So the trumpeters went on the highway and sounded the cease-fire. The boys just gave a little shout and that was all.

NARRATOR:

The men of the 85th Battalion couldn't even do that.

CROWELL, H.E.:

85th

Our only place for a Headquarters was in the cellar of a house. The Germans had flooded the whole thing with tear gas and the tear gas affects your throat. We were a whispering battalion for a week. There wasn't a man standing in our parade that could shout if he wanted to when the word came about the armistice. They didn't believe it, as a matter of fact, but they couldn't shout if they wanted.

HINE, Joe:

2 CMR

There was no cheering, just a sense of relief. It seemed to be a let-down somehow and then, of course, we began to think about the fellows that had just got it.

MITCHELL, C.H.:

19th

This chap, Clarence McFaull, he and I chummed together and I married his sister after I came back. Well, I'd just got word that he'd been killed and it was very very sad. You lose your best pal and you didn't just feel like celebrating. There was something about it that morning. It wasn't jubilant to me.

HUTCHISON, P.P.:

42nd

We didn't get word to come back into the city until well after dark and the ones that were in the city had the celebration. We could hear it from where we were out on the outskirts, the bells ringing and the cheering and the bands playing.

OLIVER, Doug.:

18th

As for the civilians, right on the tick of 11. o'clock they came up out of the cellars in which they had been hiding for forty-eight hours and really let go. They scampered around yelling "Vive les Anglais," and "Vive les Canadiens". They dished out coffee and cognac free as if there was no end to the stuff. Somebody hauled out a piano and began to play K-K-K-Katie. Everybody began to dance. The Burgomaster of Ciple, in full regalia, climbed out upon a watering trough and delivered some impassioned appeal to which nobody would listen. Brand new Belgian flags flew everywhere. And they put on a real show for us.

KILPATRICK, G.:

42nd

I remember a civilian running down the street in his wooden shoes crying "Hang out your flags", and from the strange places that they'd hidden their flags -- rolled up in a blind or under the carpet, and so on, they dug out their flag, and when the sun rose on Mons it was on a beflagged and decorated city. At 7. o'clock the Pipe Band led the Headquarter details into Mons. There was a perfect furor of enthusiasm in the response. I remember an old woman clinging to the stirrup of my saddle and offering me the heel of a very stale-looking brown loaf. It was all she had but her heart was in it. It is impossible for us to realize what it means to be prisoners of an intolerable regime for four years and then suddenly to be free.

NARRATOR:

And as the day wore on the joy of the Belgian citizens infected them and, one suspects, there were other outside influences at work. At any rate the troops did celebrate.

LITTLE, G.:
PPCLI

We received a message that there would be a victory parade in Mons and off we set from Jemappes. A very happy parade that day. They had not only our own two Bands, Pipers and Brass Band, but we also had the R.C.R. Band, so it made it quite a gala occasion for us and for the natives of Jemappes too. Our troops who, during the first war, marched in fours were marching about eight abreast, each one of the four being accompanied by a Belgian Mademoiselle. We did look like Coxie's Army, I'm sure, but we enjoyed it and it was quite obvious they did.

PERRY, R.G.:
PPCLI

Well there was a large celebration held in the public square in Mons. General Sir Arthur Currie came into Mons with his staff on the afternoon of November the 11th, and at that time there was an official reception tendered to him and all of the troops in the vicinity. All of us were presented with a miniature medal by the Burgomaster and, owing to the hospitality which was extended to all ranks by the citizens of Mons, it was a very gay day, and far from dry.

BOND, J.:
26th

The big square was roped off there at Mons and I had a pretty sweet jag on. I wanted to get down to the other side so I just walked under the rope and right down across it and I was going this way and that way but I made it and nobody stopped me. We were back two years when they showed the picture of "The Road Back" in the Strand Theatre, and I says to the wife, I said, "How would you like to go up and see that picture 'The Road Back'." I said, "It might be good." She says, "All right," so we got a couple of nice seats there and the crowds began to gather in and the picture came on and everybody was interested and they were watching it, till that come onto that picture and I was just as plain going down across that square as I am here, and somebody recognized me down in the audience, and he gave one whoop out of him and he said, "There goes Bond down through there," he says, "and drunk as usual." Well, the wife just took one look at me like that. She looked, and I said, "Holy Heaven above, don't let on, keep still." She said, "For Heaven's sake, is that the way you won a war?" I never took a better picture in me life.

MACKLIN, W.H.S.:
19th

As the day went along everybody in the whole city of Mons began to celebrate. Every single house and every building was decorated with a flag or flags, and all the civilians turned out and all the pubs opened up and served free beer and free cognac and free everything else, and there was a tremendous outburst of rejoicing and celebration in the whole city of Mons which went on far into the night and all the soldiers participated in this.

PERRY, R.G.:
PPCLI

For souvenir purposes the civilians removed all the buttons from our tunics, our identification badges, as well as our hat badges and, frankly, at the end of the day I believe that my tunic was held together by safety pins.

PARSONS, M.E.:
2 CMR

In Mons that evening we were standing on one of the main thoroughfares, and we saw this crowd coming down and it was just a mass of people and there was band instruments playing and people were waving flags, a real hullabaloo, and you know they just carried everybody with them.

MACKLIN, W.H.S.:
19th

The people went through the city in parties, with civilians and soldiers arm-in-arm, roaring through the streets singing songs at the top of their voices and they would turn and invade one estaminet and everybody would have a drink and then they'd all come out in a file and go down to the next place. It was a spontaneous and unorganized celebration.

ODLUM, V.W.:
11th Inf.Bgde.

I had already received permission to go down to Paris. I had never been there, and four of us, all General Officers, started out in a motor car to go to Paris. And as we went down, not knowing anything about the Armistice at all, we saw crowds on the roads, and growing crowds, and hilarious crowds, and we thought they were greeting us. We thought it was a tribute to us as Canadians, and we took it that way until we got into Paris itself and then we were enlightened, and the treatment we got in Paris was simply wonderful. The old men with their silk hats would stop in front of us, put their hats on the pavement and come and throw their arms around us and kiss us, and the young ladies did the same thing. Everyone -- they thought we were wonderful and we were commencing to think it too.

NARRATOR: The whole of the western world went just a little mad with joy that day.

POPE, M. A.:
Engineers

Armistice Day in London was something out of this world, something out of this world. Somebody said, "Let's go to the Palace." So we went to Buckingham Palace and there was a crowd there, swaying, cheering, singing "God Save the King." The King and Queen came out on the balcony. They were cheered again and again and it was a very moving sight indeed.

PEARKES, G.R.:
5 CMR

I got out of hospital on Armistice Day. It had been arranged that I have lunch with a couple of my uncles, both of whom were in the Church, and they had invited me to have lunch at the Junior Constitutional Club which today is Canada House, in Trafalgar Square, and I drove up to the Junior Constitutional Club with about fifteen munition girls sitting on top of the taxi. Well, I think my uncles were rather shocked. (laughs).

NARRATOR: In time the loud rejoicing dwindled down, the crowds went home to beds around the world and the troops were left in Flanders, their homes a long way off, further than Tipperary and their job was not yet done.

The German Armies were beaten but they were still intact, withdrawing toward the Rhine. Someone must follow.

ROSS, Alex.:
28th

The 1st and the 2nd Divisions were the Canadian contingent to the Rhine. As far as we were concerned the war was still on. It was only an armistice and we moved, therefore, in proper formation and I commanded the advance guard of the 2nd Division all the way to the Rhine. We moved then by easy stages -- footmarched all the way. We ran into bad weather when we got through the Ardennes. It was cold and wet and very miserable. A very narrow road and poor accommodation. It wasn't very comfortable.

NARRATOR:

Well - neither were the trenches. But men who would cheerfully accept the miseries of trench life so long as there was a war to be won found the discomforts of this epilogue unbearable. They could accept the fact that they must march to the Rhine, but must they do it in full marching order, lugging sixty pounds of gear, their ammunition and their rifles?

FRAME, W.B.:
49th

You can probably put yourself in our position. Myself I had been in France for three years and the army for four, and I didn't want to go to the Rhine. I wanted to get to hell home out of there.

STEWART, J.S.:
Artillery

I was just going to Division and I got to the place where they told me Division Headquarters was and I saw quite a gathering in the square and a fellow up on a bandstand or something or other and he was haranguing the troops. "Will we carry our packs tomorrow?" And you'd hear a thousand voices say, "No! Where did Currie get all his ribbons? From us! Are we going to carry those packs tomorrow?" "No!" "What are we going to do? Sit down".

And the next day they sat on the side of the road and wouldn't move until at last some of the sergeants got around and talked them into it. I thought they had a fair grouch. Why should soldiers who have been through Hell have to carry a sixty point pack on their back as well as their arms and ammunition, and I says, "They've got a legitimate kick."

NARRATOR:

The surly mood passed quickly. The traditional good humour could not be long disguised and the men marched on toward the Rhine.

MASON, D.H.C.:
3rd

I saw that we would arrive at the border at a little place called Potho at exactly noon. So we went into a field just short of the border and the M.O. and the Padre got out and laid a bandage across the road to

(CONT)

MASON, D.H.C.:(cont)

mark the border, and then we heard a clutter coming up the road and here was Sir Arthur Currie with his staff and a little escort of cavalry and without a word the troops gave a cheer there that I still can hear ringing. It was the heartiest thing I've ever heard in my life, and I wish that some of these people that thought that Currie was unpopular with the troops could have heard it. They didn't know the extent to which he had saved them but they sensed it. So, headed by the Corps and Divisional Commanders, and with the band playing "The Maple Leaf", we made the Corps official entry into Germany, and I think most of us were thinking of the lads who hadn't lived to see that day and wishing they could have been there to see it. As we went over the border riding along in front of the Battalion you could feel it behind you, feel the feeling in it.

PRICE, C.B.:

14th

The strange sad thing was that so comparatively few of the men who'd borne the heat and burden of winning the battles were there and that was one of the sad things.

MASON, D.H.C.:

3rd

The march to the Rhine finished up in a race between the 1st and 2nd Divisions quite unexpectedly. I happened to have the advance guard, and just before noon I was just mounting my horse and the signaller was just going to leave the telephone when a message came through from Brigade, a very excited Brigade Major said, "The Brigadier wants you to get to the Rhine tomorrow as soon as possible." So I said, "Right." 10.15-10.30, something of that kind, the next morning we hit the Rhine, telephoned through that we had reached the Rhine and gave them the time. All I heard was a fervent 'Thank God'. That afternoon I think that I had pretty near every member of the Divisional Brigade staff in to see me to shake my hand. It appeared that they had suddenly discovered that the 2nd Division was further ahead than they thought, you see. Hence this frantic message. Sir Archie MacDonnell wouldn't have been fit to live with for a week, you know, if the 2nd Division had got there before the 1st.

PRICE, C.B.:

14th

We got there on December the 12th, then on the 13th we were to march across the Rhine in style and it was given to the 1st Canadian Division to lead that wing of the British Army across the Rhine and the 3rd Brigade was given the right to lead the 1st Division.

(CONT)

PRICE, C.B.:(cont)

And, in the four Commanding Officers' tossing, our C.O. won the toss so we were all formed up ready to go. It was a mean sort of a day and very few Germans on the streets, of course. They were behind their windows watching and Sir Archie MacDonnell rode up and he said, "Hello, good morning, Worrel." He said, "Your Battalion looks magnificent today." "Thank you sir," said Worrel. He said, "You know," he said, "I'd like very much to have a Highland Battalion lead the Highland Brigade across the bridge." He said, "Don't you think that you could let one of the others lead it?" "No, sir," said Worrell, "We won the toss. "Your Battalion's in a hell of a mess," he said, and rode off. So our band led the parade playing "Rule Britannia."

CAMP, R.H.:
18th

When we got into Hanuff, about 30 kilometres on the other side of the Rhine, when we marched down the street, well there wasn't a soul on the street but you could see people peeking from out behind the curtains and we found out why afterwards.

WINGFIELD, Fred.:
Cyclist.

Apparently they were told that the Canadian Army was made up primarily of red Indians and there was danger of scalping and they were to hide all the silverware that they could possibly hide.

CAMP, R.H.:
18th

They were quite surprised when they found out we were civilized.

WHITEMAN, H.H.:
14th

We were not supposed to fraternize with these people but I think we were a little too harsh with them. For instance, I can remember the order went out that they were to salute us as we passed. That is to say, the officers, and I didn't take too much stock of this because they were human after all. I didn't want them kow-towing to me, and there was a lot of knocking the men's hats off as we passed and they resented this, especially the German sailors. They nearly rioted in Cologne when I was there. I know we were called out to quell this near-riot and then the order was cancelled and we were told just to be decent with them, and we were that way.

We went into a village named Unter Esback and the villagers there were extremely courteous and very decent people. It was quite an experience. The people were very short of food and I remember what great pleasure it gave us to share our rations with them and, in return, they would organize little parties for us. We wanted to be friendly with them.

NARRATOR:

The realization was a long time sinking in but now they knew that it was really over. The private soldier and the Brigadier General made peace with Fritz and Fritz's wife and kids and Fritz's dog. No longer did they think of him as "Hun".

COSGRAVE, L.V.N.:
Artillery

I let this Oberst have his own little cottage down here while we took over his big house, you see. It was just before Christmas and up came a message, "Could he borrow his own piano over there because the children wanted to sing the Christmas Carols and he would be very grateful". And I said, "Oh well, yes, all right, he can have it." I got a batch of the troops then and we heaved the piano down to the cottage sort of thing and then he said, "Won't you overlook the fraternizing for one night," he said, "and come and join us." So we adjourned afterwards down to the cottage and there he was. His wife had been quite a prominent opera singer before the war and she started singing various things and the next thing I had these two little small fry on my knee, little flaxen-haired things, while we merrily sang "Heilige Nacht", all the old German songs and the Oberst clicked his heels when we went back and he said, "Danke Shon".

NARRATOR:

Christmas that year meant even more to another group of Canadians who had not made peace with the Germans; the men in the prison camps beyond the zone of occupation.

SEAMAN, Eric:
3rd

I'll never forget the train that pulled out of this camp and on to the docks in Hamburg, and it was Christmas Day, 1918. There were soldiers everywhere, on the running boards, on the top of the railway cars, and everything. I'm sure there must have been about twenty-five hundred of them and we got off it whooping and yelling, and there what do you suppose we saw at the very dock, right in Hamburg. There she was, the "City of Poona", with the Union Jack floating at the stern. Oh gee, the sight of that flag after months and months in that bloody country, you know. It got so you wondered if you would ever get back.

NARRATOR:

On the 5th January 1919, the 1st and 2nd Divisions began their return to Belgium to rejoin the rest of the Corps. No trouble this time. They went by train.

POPE, M.A.:
Engineers

A damp dark winter in the low countries is pretty tough. We were in the middle of an agricultural plain and there was precious little we could do for our men. I was leaving my office about half past six one night, and I was going down the village cobblestones and two men passed me and one said to the other, "Well Bill, what are you going to do tonight?", and the other chap, in a disgusted tone of voice said, "Hell what is there to do? I think I'll go to bed."

MASON, D.H.C.:
3rd

We were there for the winter with nothing to do, no entertainment, and not the impetus of the war to give the feeling of urgency, you see, but the men were perfect. I don't say there were no sins committed, of course there were, there always are, but there was no case of somebody disobeying an order deliberately, let alone two or three men going together on it.

STEVENS, G.R.:
PPCLI

Nevertheless to a certain extent the ties of discipline began to loosen from the day of the Armistice. In one first class regiment a somewhat sardonic trend developed towards its officers. The men would salute but with what one officer described as unspoken insolence in their eyes. This particular regiment solved the problem in a certain fashion. They had one or two rather good boxers in the regiment and at all sports meets two of these officers would be put into the ring with instructions to knock hell out of each other. This was done and it created a great deal of enthusiasm. The troops cheered such performances to the echo and thereafter there was less insolence in their eyes.

PANET, E. deB.:
1 Div.

The majority of people wanted to go to England. Well you could not give leave to everybody because the transportation facilities were not available. So they came to the conclusion that we'd send the whole Canadian Corps from France to England and then they would be there for about a month and then they were transferred.

McLAUGHLIN, R.:
14th

We were shipped up to a camp in North Wales at Rhyl. I spent Christmas there and New Years there, and I was really disappointed. I had expected to spend at least one of them at home.

CHAMBERS, J.I.:
7th

When we got to Rhyl there was no organization. The war, of course, was over and the discipline was pretty loose. And a day or two after we got two or three mobs together, and they wanted leave, they wanted pay. A Captain appeared, he talked to the men about playing the game and being good soldiers and he'd see what he could do for them. And the next morning all the boys turned out on parade. And they produced some P.T. instructors. The last thing I saw the P.T. instructors were running faster than ever they had run in their lives, with the troops after them. It was just a red rag at a bull.

PANET, E. deB:
1 Div.

The Cabinet in Ottawa wanted the troops to be returned first out first in, which was a ridiculous situation. It couldn't be done. For example, the clerks and the Army Service Corps Personnel, well they didn't have as many casualties as the others. The result is they would be all the ones going away. Well, who was going to look after the troops? It was an impossible situation and Currie, naturally, opposed that right away. He said, "No, it can't be done." Above all the value of maintaining morale was important. It could best be done by keeping the men as long as possible in the units in which they had fought together and won battles. Finally Sir Robert Borden wired Ottawa from every point of view it was desirous to demobilize the Corps by units.

CHAMBERS, J.I.:
7th

There were a number of conscripts were sent back to Canada before the fighting troops were. I think it was involved with the bonus. They got a bonus if you had been six months overseas. If you came back to Canada in less than six months you didn't get the bonus.

McLAUGHLIN, R.:
14th

They used to hold parades twice a day. We'd go out and stand around and some fellow would get up on a big rostrum and start reeling off a list of numbers and names. The conscripts in those days, we called them "Umptyumpties". I remember one particular case, this chap, I think he was a Company sergeant-major. He called out one number. It was 808888, oh there was nothing else but eights and zeroes in it, and it must have been about eight or nine digits in it, and some fellow behind me shouts out, "That s.o.b. hasn't left Canada yet."

PANET, E. deB.:
1 Div.

Troops were transferred to Canada much quicker than was first anticipated. Eighteen months was the original estimate that would be required to bring the troops back. As a matter of fact two-thirds of the overseas forces reached home within five months. And before a year had passed repatriation was virtual completed.

NARRATOR:

A summing up.

POPE, M.A.:
Engineers

It was a big chunk out of one's life. It was a wonderful experience. There were bad times, but it was an experience, I think, that enriches one's life a great deal, a very great deal.

CLARK, Gregory:
4 CMR

I got back greatly enlarged by the war in mind and in spirit and in personality. I was a bookworm, a quiet little bookworm when I went and I came home a rather tough character. I immediately returned to a job which was already larger by reason of what I had been through.

NARRATOR:

Over 50,000 Canadians would not come home again.

Gregory Clark asks - - - "What do we think of our dead."

CLARK, Gregory:
4 CMR

What do we think of our dead? We put up monuments to them, and we give them two minutes of silence once a year, which I regard as an affront because where you've lost someone immediately dear to you you are silent in an area of your mind and your heart your whole living life.

NARRATOR:

Here dead lie we because we did not choose

To live and shame the land from which we sprung.
Life, to be sure, is nothing much to lose;

But young men think it is, and we were young.

MACKLIN, W.H.S.:
19th

That's the tragedy of war. It's always fought by the youth of the country, the very best there are. I have a photograph of the 19th Battalion having their New Year's dinner in Seizburg in Germany, and the astonishing thing about it is the extreme youth of all the men in it. Looking at them now they looked like boys, and they were. Hardly any of them were over twenty-five years of age. These are the men that won the First World War and the Second.

KILPATRICK, G.:
42nd

I want to pay my own tribute to the men who taught me so much of what true manhood is. I mean the fellow in the rear rank, Private number 416729, John Smith. He was the man who really won the war. I can see him now in my mind's eye, coming out of the line cumbered with muddy gear, his steel helmet at a rakish angle, the sweat running down over his grimy face, the eyes that might have been bitter but never were. The Private in the rear ranks, the man who grumbled at the rations and cursed the working parties and referred to his Sergeant in language which continually amazed me by its vocabulary. The man who was embarrassed when he was praised and acutely uncomfortable should he be decorated, and yet everywhere and always could laugh. He was the fellow that broke the Hindenburg Line and opened the road for the final victory, the man in the rear ranks whose shattered body filled the trenches over which the guns drove in swift pursuit. I'll never forget him and I thank God I knew him.

NARRATOR:

Next week "THE AFTERMATH", a hard look at the Canada to which our fighting men returned and the long view of an historian on the effects the conflict had upon the nation.

Next Sunday afternoon -- "THE AFTERMATH".

ANNOUNCER:

The first-person accounts of WORLD WAR I were researched, arranged and edited under the direction of Frank Lalor.

The series, originated by A. E. Powley, is written, narrated and produced by J. Frank Willis.

- 1 ANNOUNCER: "FLANDERS' FIELDS", Chapter 17, "THE AFTERMATH".
- 2 SOUND: CHURCH BELLS SOFTLY: A CHRISTMAS CHIME: BG
- 3 NARRATOR: December 23rd, 1918. Lieutenant John Kearney, M.C. writes to his father, the Christmas letter from France:
- 4 KEARNEY: You must be delighted that the peace bells are ringing. So are we, but we are more than anxious to get home. Everyone is disgusted with the idea of parading through Germany like a lot of prize cattle. There is no reason for keeping us here now. Unless demobilization moves along faster the troops will certainly get out of hand. It is getting my goat to be stuck here at an artillery school learning how to fight at this stage of the game when I could be doing some useful work at home.
- 5 SOUND: STEAMER SIREN: DISTANTLY: FAINTLY
- 6 NARRATOR: There were already three ships at sea. "Corsican", "Grampian", "Northern" were due to dock at Halifax a day after that letter was written.
- 7 OFFICER: It was madness to attempt to demobilize the Canadian Army until the first of March!
- 8 NARRATOR: So said an officer at Headquarters. But they were doing it. The boys were on the way.
- 9 SOUND: BLAST OF STEAMER SIREN CLOSE ON
- 10 NARRATOR: "Corsican", "Grampian", "Northern" came in. The first and luckiest stumbled down the gangways. They were also the sorest -
- 11 MAN: (OUT OF GRUMBLING CROWD) Jammed us in like sardines - shoved us down in the steerage, anywhere they felt like -
- 12 MAN 2: The food! - wasn't fit for pigs -

- 1 MAN: Didn't even get what was coming to us - bloody stewards held back the best of it and then sold it to us -
- 2 MAN 2: Swabbed the decks with the fresh water and left us to shave in salt. And try to get a breath of fresh air! - oh no - promenade deck reserved for officers and civilians!
- 3 NARRATOR: Never to be heard again, those gripes. After the first fumbles the boys came home well-fed, well-berthed, good-humored - (X) to a country waiting for them -
- 4 SOUND: FROM (X) ABOVE: GREAT WAVE OF CHEERING OFF: BAND
- 5 NARRATOR 2: 9.00 A.M. "Carmania" docks at Halifax. 9.15 embarkation staff aboard. 9.25 the first of the troops coming down the gangway -
- 6 NARRATOR: Herded along through the hordes of eager helpers - the Soldiers' Information Booths, the Y.M.C.A., the Knights of Columbus, the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, the Patriotic Society, the Soldiers' Wives League -
- 7 NARRATOR 2: 'What can we do for you, soldier? - have a coffee - have a doughnut - here's from a grateful country -
- 8 SOUND: TRAIN BELL: STEAM: TRAIN UNDER WAY: WHISTLE IN AGAIN AT (X) BELOW
- 9 NARRATOR 2: Midnight. The last lot out of the station. Eight thousand home-bound soldiers fanning across the country in a dozen special trains.
(X)
- 10 NARRATOR: They set the quotas at thirty thousand a month - and doubled them. For six months the average hovered at two thousand men a day, pouring home.
- 11 SOUND: MARCHING BANDS: CHEERING CROWDS: BG: IN AT (X's) BELOW
- 12 NARRATOR: March 9th - the Royal Canadians got their welcome in Halifax. March 11th - the kilts and the sporrans swung through Montreal - the 42nd was home. (X)
- 13 NARRATOR 2: March 19th - the Princess Pats, cheered at every town from the sea to Ottawa, took the salute of the capital. Toronto blazed on the 4th for the Canadian Mounted Rifles. It was Winnipeg's turn on March 23rd as the 43rd Cameron Highlanders swung through the streets.
(X)

- 1 NARRATOR: May, and the Vingt-Deux's came to Quebec and Montreal - the Fighting Fifth of Saskatchewan and the Little Black Devils of Winnipeg were streaming out to the prairies. It was the same everywhere - in every city street - rolling waves of khaki, sloped rifles, glistening boots, spanking equipment swinging on sun-burned men. The boys were back. (X)
- 2 NARRATOR 2: Were they? The 43rd Camerons marched through Winnipeg with Colonel Chandler at the head, the one man left of the officers who had gone with him. There were one hundred originals among the two thousand of the 13th and 14th Battalions who marched through Montreal, and there were ten thousand more unseen who had passed through their ranks to find a cross or a crutch of a hospital bed. The "Terrible Tenth" were two thousand men when they swung down Jasper in Edmonton, two thousand of fourteen thousand who had worn those same insignia. Of the 7th British Columbia, marching through Vancouver in June, there were fourteen hundred officers and seven thousand men whom nobody saw or cheered because they were no longer there. The boys were back but not all and they were not the same men, any of them.
- 3 NARRATOR: It was August before the final figures came out, as final as any could be: The dead - fifty-four thousand, eight hundred and nine. The missing, eight thousand, one hundred and nineteen. The prisoners of war, two thousand, eight hundred and eighteen, the wounded - one hundred and forty-nine thousand, seven hundred and nine. Total casualties - two hundred and fifteen thousand, four hundred and fifty-five.
- 4 NARRATOR 2: We had mobilized an army of five hundred and fifteen thousand soldiers. We had produced seventy general officers, some of them as good as any and some as bad. We had built five hundred war factories and sent sixty-two million shells to France. We had spent sixty-five million dollars on ships, we had sent a billion, seven hundred million dollars worth of food and we had put up two billion dollars in cash.
- 5 NARRATOR: We had sixty-four Victoria Crosses to show for it, seventeen thousand other assorted decorations, and the loot we came home with after the fashion of soldiers made a sizeable pile.

- 1 NARRATOR 2: Nobody knows what swung at the belts or nestled in kitbags but officially, for the museums, there were twenty aeroplanes, five thousand rifles, one thousand machine guns, and uncounted shells of every calibre ranging up to the projectiles for 'Big Bertha' which stood twice as tall as a man. There was Hindenburg's sword, Ludendorff's field telephone and Prinz Eitel Friedrich's helmet.
- 2 NARRATOR: There were also, for the archives, six hundred tons of war records which, according to Major-General Mewburn, the Minister of Militia, were "of a value beyond estimate".
- 3 NARRATOR: What else had we come back with? - come to? - come from?
- 4 WOMAN: (MILDLY TART) Fifty thousand war brides, if you'd like one statistic. They came back with the troops, and God bless them. Most of them, I guess, God did. But to the girls who'd lost their boys and the mothers who'd lost their sons and the wives who'd lost their husbands and the women who'd spend the weeks and months and years visiting men in hospitals or telling men that arms and legs and eyes didn't matter, or that gas-choked lungs and shell-shocked nerves could be cured, or that that other woman somewhere across the water didn't change anything, you might add one other class, one small, forgotten, slightly special branch: the girl who hadn't had anyone and now would never have because whoever he might have been and even if he was back, he was back married. Ah well, we were only fifty thousand among so many more. I wonder - did anyone ever write a song or design an emblem or shed a tear for the Legion of Canadian Spinsters born of that war?
- 5 NARRATOR: So much born of that war, unsung, unwept for, not even quite conceived. Tears dried up when you thought of it all, if you dared to. There were no words. The very statistics were a kind of blasphemy.
- 6 NARRATOR 2: Of the fifty million men engaged in the war it is estimated that thirty-six million were killed, wounded maimed, weakened by captivity or were missing. The total direct costs of the war may be estimated as something over one hundred and eighty-six billion dollars. To that must be added the indirect costs, including the capitalized value of human life -
- 7 NARRATOR: - 'the capitalized value of human life' - beautiful statistical phrase, that -

- 1 NARRATOR 2: - property losses on sea and land, loss of production, etcetera, estimated at an additional one hundred and fifty billion dollars. To that again must be added the loss of the lands of western Europe which have been churned up, riddled and poisoned for at least a generation, and the age-old treasures destroyed, upon which no value can be placed. (FADING) To which again must be added ...
- 2 NARRATOR: It would go on, mounting and mounting, widening like what it was, a desolate, illimitable flood, carrying away the wreckage of a world.
- 3 NARRATOR 2: The Kaiser was to be hanged for it - Germany was to pay and pay. Lloyd George came back to power elected on that platform. In the newspaper cartoons a grim-faced John Bull proclaimed: 'Resolved that I shall neither forgive nor forget the bestial crimes of the Hun'. There would be occupations, indemnities, the iron heel for the iron heel - the voices rose from the wreckage, desperate amid the wreckage, while every day belied them. It would not be long before the Germany of the spike-helmeted kaiser or the bloody-handed hun changed in the newspaper cartoons to the Germany of the fat, spectacled, beer-bellied professor, no more beloved, but bland in his defiance. He carried firecrackers in the bulging seat of his pants and they were labelled 'Bolshevism' or 'Lenine' - the cartoonists still spelt that name with an 'e'. 'Dassn't spank me', the captions said - 'think of the Bolshevik danger'. It was real enough, God knew - the guns had shot away the chains - a new beast walked the earth, and what would there be to face it with but the old devils, bloody hands and all? Law? - the League of Nations? - the one was a spattered mockery, the other a pale hope. Victory? There was no victory here. There was no hope for the new world in any of the old ways, but where was the new way?
- 4 CURRIE: I do not know what I shall do when I return to Canada. I thank God that I am alive, and the first thought that comes to one's mind is to devote the rest of one's life toward bettering the condition of those who served in France - their wives, families or any other dependents. I believe the survivors have not been permitted to live for nothing.
- 5 NARRATOR: Currie wrote that, the Commander of the Canadian Corps, on February 5, 1919; and it was not 'for official release'. It was a letter to a friend. "I do not know what I shall do". He would have to defend himself first from the crows and vultures and then like the lesser men, like all the men he had led, face the new country and the new world.

- 1 NARRATOR 2: By late summer most of the army was back. By September 20, 1919, three hundred and thirty-eight thousand, eight hundred and thirty-three men had been demobilized through twenty-two dispersal areas set up across the country. Each man had chosen his point of dispersal, received his gratuity and pension rights, his disability grant, his medical check-up, his advice, his booklets, his papers, his choice of all that was offered. It seemed a lot. If you wanted a job they hunted one up for you and often found it. You could have a homestead. You could have a loan to buy land or start a business. They meant well, all right, those officers at the desks, mostly in civvies now, calling you 'Mister' now.
- 2 NARRATOR: They could look at their figures and feel they hadn't been idle, or unsympathetic or indifferent. Most of them had been in the war too, and hadn't forgotten it. They had placed over thirty thousand men who wanted jobs; they had 'interested' eighty thousand in taking up land, and actually put seventeen thousand on the land. They had lent them fifty-one million dollars to start them out there would be thirty to forty million a year for pension and another forty million to care for emergency cases. You read the box-car figures and you knew the country was grateful; you'd no reason to doubt it. You had other evidence. There was that letter - it had been handed to each man personally as he stepped aboard ship for home -
- 3 GEORGE V: The Queen and I wish you God-seed, a safe return to the happiness and joy of home life with an early restoration to health. A grateful Mother-Country thanks you for faithful service. George, R.I.
- 4 NARRATOR: Printed, of course, but printed to look like handwriting; and it was the handwriting of the King. He'd meant it; there was no reason to doubt that. It was something to keep, put away for the kids, trot out with the ribbons and medals and the spiked helmet and the other souvenirs when you told them about the war. Told them? How could you? How could you tell anybody what the war had been like, or what it was like now, on Civvy Street, at peace?
- 5 NARRATOR 2: There weren't so many who woke up screaming at night; they were the exceptions, probably. The percentage, at least, of the men still in the hospitals was reasonable by military standards, and they didn't lack for anything that could be given them. Most of the well men had found jobs or gone back to the old one - there wasn't much talk of unemployment yet. Everything should have been Jake - only it wasn't.

- 1 NARRATOR 2: You'd been a soldier and come back a hero and that was finished with now; let it go. It wasn't that you wanted to keep it. There were men ahead of you now in some of the good jobs, the jobs you'd wanted; you had to expect that. They'd been too young to go, or not strong enough, or indispensable; it wasn't their fault, it was just - well, war, the luck of war. As the last of the units returned you walked down with the rest of the people in civvies to see them come, and see the crowds getting thinner. You had to expect that. People couldn't go on cheering forever; they got hoarse. They couldn't put each new unit's return on the front pages; the news kept crowding it off. That flood of news kept coming and the flood of khaki was dwindling down to a trickle. Soldiers, soldiers at home or coming home were getting to be an old story.
- 2 NARRATOR: The big years, the greatest, most terrible years you'd ever know, were behind you now. They were gone with the scattering men, the last handshake, the last backslap, the last insult to the old pal. No more muddy firestep, no more waiting for that first crash of the barrage and the whistle to send you after it, no more khaki shoulders rubbing your own, stinking and dirty as your own, men as scared as you, ready to die with you, or for you if they had to. No reveille, no sergeants, no orders. You were alone with freedom and memories and anti-climax and it felt - empty.
- 3 NARRATOR 2: It wasn't really that you wanted to talk about it so much - some of it you couldn't talk about, and wouldn't - but you didn't get over it in a day, either. It didn't just wash off with the mud or slip off with the uniform. Some of it you wanted to keep - share - and who could you share it with? The wife - the kids - the friends - the girl - the old folks? They were hungry enough to help, most of them. They asked questions by the thousands, and with each question and each answer the gap seemed only to widen.
- 4 NARRATOR: What could you say that really meant anything about the terror and horror of war, the warmth of comradeship, the daily presence of death, near as the next shoulder? How could you say what had lived and died and grown in that savage who wore your name, living with rats in the mud, sharing his food with rats, learning the rat's cunning and the rat's stealth? There had been a bit of the god too in those men who lived with rats and lived like rats, if it is godlike to face death and face it down. How could you say all that? How could you even hint of those dimensions of filth and misery, shot with their pride and splendor? Sometimes it seemed you were talking across a gulf wide as no man's land to the people who hadn't seen those stinking trenches.

- 1 NARRATOR 2: The loneliness was strange, strange as the new store clothes, the sidewalk underfoot, sleep in a dry, warm bed - and it wasn't as comfortable. You were half a hero and half an embarrassing stranger - not a soldier any more and not quite a citizen yet - you were a returned man. You couldn't get much involved in the fight over Daylight Saving Time - the cities wanted it and the farmers didn't. Prohibition was another of the battles of the home front where you seemed to stand on the sidelines.
- 2 NARRATOR: The returned man was back to a country that was drying up. John Barleycorn, it seemed, was going down with the Kaiser. Coming from the ranks and the daily tot of rum, or from the land of pubs or the country of vin ordinaire it seemed odd and unlikely, but that didn't matter much. The folks at home had decided, the soldier hadn't been asked. His opinion was often expressive, when given.
- 3 NARRATOR 2: When the GWVA began to form and the clubrooms opened it was like diving down for a while into the old warm fug of a dugout. You knew where you were with these sods, you knew who you were, you spoke the language. It was warm here, it was tempting to stay and come back - but it was a kind of cocoon, after all. When you began to hear the old stories for the tenth or twentieth time, or hear yourself telling them, you knew you had to get out of it, out of that mood, anyway. And it was a wrench - a big wrench for some. There were a few who never made it, casualties of war too, though you won't find their names on any list.
- 4 NARRATOR: Out on the western prairies the farms were booming. Wheat prices sky-high. Farm hands getting three times what they'd got before the war, with new machinery doing half the work. It had to; a lot of the men who were back were not staying. They were getting restless, drifting off to the cities.
- 5 SOUND: FACTORY WHISTLE
- 6 NARRATOR 2: The cities. They were the strangest of all. War plants miles of them - all new. And all closing down now, changing over. Mountains of war goods now, all junk, sold for a dime in the dollar or trucked away for scrap. The men streamed out of the factory gates, and the women too, wondering which would be the last payday, when would conversion start? But nobody seemed worried. The talk was of new factories, new booms - the statistics made you dizzy.

OLIVER, Doug.:(cont) attaching young American officers to different units to give them a little idea, and I was just a lieutenant and I was in command of the Company and I said to the Colonel, "Why don't you let these officers stay here, we're being relieved tonight. We could see that they got out all right." And the Colonel said, "That's allright." And so he got Brigade on the phone and they said it was allright and the boys would come out the next morning. And, just as luck would have it, right up at the head of the stairs in the dugout they had one post, and three German shells came over, whizbangs, and pitched in behind and up went the cry, "Stretcher bearer, stretcher bearer, stretcher bearer" and the result was three men were hauled down the dugout steps and put on the floor and they weren't, none of them, badly wounded but they had to be patched up and this was war. The Americans were seeing war right before their eyes and they loved it.

Well the next morning at four o'clock we were awakened with the doggondest barrage you ever heard in your life. It seemed half of Lievin was falling down. Two runners came over from Battalion Headquarters and said, "Every man be on the alert, there's something going on up front and the whole situation is confusing and push out a patrol and see if you meet any trouble, you see. So we got the patrol away and what was happening was this big German feeling-out raid had been pulled right down and the Germans were through right to the dugout in which the Americans were sleeping. They had not so much as seen war first-hand of those three slightly wounded men, here next morning Germans were right outside that dugout entrance throwing swendigo sticks right down on top of them.

Now I dunno, I think, I imagine they got off all right because there were two entrances to the dugout and the Germans may have missed one but they were right there and the counter-attack platoon, this reserve platoon of the 21st battalion, took the Germans in the flank and drove them back.

NARRATOR:

The Canadians, up to strength, bushy-tailed and full of fight, spent their time out of the line in intensive training — forever improving themselves. General Pope remembers a couple of inspections.

- 1 NEWSPAPER: Sugar supplies in Canada are being artificially restricted and sugar prices are being unwarrantably advanced by combines and conspiracies which are absolutely pernicious and unlawful.
- 2 NARRATOR 2: You turned to the ads and wondered what had become of the dollar bill. No dollar shoes any more - the old, clean magic of the buck was gone. Two-ninety-eight, three ninety-eight, seven-ninety-eight -- everything was something-ninety-eight and something shocking. Bread, meat, milk, gas, street-car tickets, butter - everything going up while the gratuities dwindled and the pension cheque and the pay cheque began to look old-fashioned. And the old-fashioned bosses went on, saving their dreams for the directors' meetings, urging you back to the work-bench and the ten-hour day, the laboring man's honest pride, his rugged individualism. None of this union stuff for the old bosses - none of that Bolshie nonsense, Collective Bargaining.
- 3 NARRATOR: They saw Red at that phrase, and they had reason to. It was loud in the air around Winnipeg; it was reddening the Red River country in the spring of 1919. There'd been strikes in Montreal, Toronto, Brandon, strikes on the west coast. They were all of them simmering still when the big one broke, in Winnipeg.
- 4 NARRATOR 2: Sixteen thousand veterans at home around Winnipeg. The papers noted it nervously, thinking of soldiers in Russia, soldiers in Germany. They were neutral, the veterans said - but they were in favor of Collective Bargaining. And they were listening to the One Big Union - the home-grown Bolshie voices -
- 5 KINGSLEY: No living thing works unless it is enslaved. But just as soon as men were enslaved by capitalism it became necessary to invent some word to express their misery and their agony - and that damned word was W-O-R-K.
- 6 FEDERATIONIST: It is now realized that compromise is impossible between the working class and the master class. It is a fight to the finish, a fight to the death.
- 7 COMMUNIST: All you have to do is to walk into any industry, tell the owner you are going to take it over, and it is done.
- 8 NARRATOR: Nobody managed things with quite that stark simplicity. There were troops in garrison. There were the Mounted Police. They hadn't struck, though the city police had. And still the words flowed out, in spite of police and soldiers.

- 1 RUSSELL: The blood that is spilled in Canada will depend on the working class. We must establish the same form of government as they have in Russia, so that we may have a Russian democracy here.
- 2 NARRATOR 2: Winnipeg seemed to be close to it for a while - a small, experimental island of red. The firemen followed the workers out on strike. The police went out, the retail clerks went out, the bakers and confectioners went out, the teamsters went out. By May 15th thirty thousand men walked the streets or stood in the picket lines. No water, till the waterworks men decided to allow a trickle. No newspapers; the pressmen were out. No meal in a restaurant, no ride on a street car, no movies. When the babies began to die a little milk began to be delivered again, "Permitted by Authority of the Strike Committee". The newspapers in other cities watched and muttered, thinking of their own restless workers and restless returned men, thinking of those sixteen thousand veterans of Winnipeg- neutral and in favor of Collective Bargaining.
- 3 RUSSELL: I say that geographically speaking the strike will continue until it extends from Halifax to Vancouver.
- 4 NARRATOR: It didn't. The trains still ran. The big men came from Ottawa, talking high from habit, talking tough from necessity. A citizens' committee grew - the ones who liked things as they were, or more or less as they were. It grew to a thousand members, then to ten thousand - and the veterans melted into it, citizens again. (X)
You began to hear factory whistles.
- 5 SOUND: FACTORY WHISTLE
- 6 HEAPS: We were having beautiful weather and we were having a beautiful strike when the citizens butted into the game and began to assert their authority.
- 7 NAR RATOR: That was the big one - the Winnipeg General Strike - the first of the gusts that reached us from the wind that walked the earth. The churned-up fields and the smashed cities were thousands of miles away but the wind came, and the angers blew in it, and the questions. What had it all been for? Who had it all been for? Men wanted an answer, wanted payment, wanted to turn the wrecked world inside out, upside down, make it again from the beginning, starting with men and women, starting with justice. Justice - you couldn't say justice won in the Winnipeg strike, or in any of the strikes, or anywhere.

(CONT)

- 1 NARRATOR:(CONT) But you could say this: there would be Collective Bargaining, there would be change; never again a country quite the same. That steely anger rising out of the horrors had peaked to a little point here, wavered and gone down. There wasn't the reason yet to drive it home, even into the fat bellies, even into the thick heads. We weren't, after all, Europe; nothing was quite as bad, nothing had eaten as deep. Maybe we could learn yet.
- 2 NARRATOR 2: So much to learn. So much just beginning to dawn on us. We weren't colonials and didn't want titles from England; that came quickly. You can't stop drinking by voting the country dry; that took longer to learn. There were all those other lessons; that you couldn't shove women back to the kitchens again, or settle a war with a peace treaty or pay for a war with an indemnity. We were only beginning to feel the way we'd grown, to feel the grip of the world, pulling us up, pulling us into it. Our dead slept with those other far-off millions, our living were alive with their living; we were all together somehow and we'd have to make the best of it.
- 3 SOUND: FACTORY SIREN FAINTLY: INTO BG
- 4 NARRATOR: The first anniversary came, the first Armistice Day. It seemed to creep up, somehow, on a country that was cheered out, on a victory that was growing stale, on a lot of worry and hurry that made men forgetful.
- 5 NARRATOR 2: The newspapers on that first November Eleventh after the victory had headlines much as usual. "Five Bolsheviks Arrested in Chicago" - "Great Welcome to Visiting Prince of Wales" - White Russians and Red Russians were fighting each other along the Ishim River, wherever that was - American Coal Miners had called off their strike at the order of the Federal Government - Parliament had prorogued in Ottawa and the members were scattering for home - Winnipeg had been hit by the earliest blizzard in years. And then, among it all, well down on the front pages, something like, "Empire Pauses on Armistice Day".
- 6 NARRATOR: The accounts seemed curiously self-conscious, as though everyone had been caught off guard and perhaps felt guilty about it. Orders had gone out from on high all right, and notices had been posted, but some of them hadn't been read, or had been forgotten. Passengers looked up surprised in the Montreal street cars as the power was cut off and all cars stopped. Then they remembered. Traffic policemen noticed, and some of them held up their hands. Traffic began to pile up, with drivers swearing before they remembered. Hurrying

(CONT)

- 1 NARRATOR:(CONT) pedestrians on the streets saw their chance and dashed for the other side, then became conscious of the quiet around them and stopped, sometimes halfway across. There was a distant wailing from factory sirens. Office windows grew jammed with heads looking out, then grew half empty as some of the clerks remained to gawk while others returned to their desks to stand in silence or look around wondering what they should do - nobody had really been told. And yet, the silence came. Across the city and across the country factory wheels stopped turning, trains ground to a standstill, there were no phone calls, no clatter of typewriters.
- 2 SOUND: FACTORY SIREN IN FAINTLY
- 3 NARRATOR 2: Many in the crowd on the street, said one reporter, stealthily set their watches - to Armistice Time or Victory Time - he wasn't sure of the name it should have. One old man, he noted, "was seen to bare his head through the whole two minutes". He was looked at and then imitated; there was a ragged rippling-off of hats and caps. You saw the self-consciousness going out of the faces, a kind of turning-inward of the eyes; you saw tears here and there.
- 4 SOUND: SIREN IN AND FINISH
- 5 NARRATOR: Then it was over, and the country went on.
PAUSE
- 6 NARRATOR 2: To what? On this Sunday of 1965 we look back across nearly a half century to the ending of that great and tragic adventure. What did it mean to us all? How did it change, how did it shape the destiny of this nation which had looked so confidently to the 20th century as the century of Canada? Many of the questions are unanswerable; we can only speculate and dream of what the world might have been without a first Great War perhaps without a second. There are almost as many questions, almost as many qualifications when we attempt to explore and measure what has actually come about. As a conclusion to this series of programmes we have asked Professor Frank H. Underhill, himself a veteran of the war and one of the greatest of our historians, to give you what answers he can.

PROFESSOR FRANK H. UNDERHILL:

The primary significance of World War I to us Canadians is that it marks the point in our history at which we assumed the full responsibilities of a mature people in a world of autonomous nation-states. To the world at large the years 1914-1918 are the date at which the 19th century came to an end and the 20th century began. Much of our present Canadian feeling of perplexity and frustration is due to the fact that we have been very slow to learn what it means to be a mature people in this passionate, violent, demonic 20th century. For we came out of World War I believing that the 20th century was just going to be a bigger and better 19th century.

In Canada we had lived a comparatively happy life through the 19th century when we were a young and immature people. From the moment in 1867 when the British American colonies federated themselves into the Dominion of Canada down to 1914 we had been buoyed up by a sense of impending greatness. Indeed, in the last few years of the 19th century, just before 1914, we were so self-confident that we were wont to predict that the 20th century would belong to Canada. We were still too young and happy to ask ourselves what we were going to do with this 20th century which was about to belong to us. Such is the way with young people. Or, at least, it was in those days. For young people then were optimistic and cheerful beings, and not the tortured existentialists that most of them seem to be today.

But we have become increasingly unhappy since we assumed the responsibilities of maturity in this strange new 20th century. We were not born mature, of course. We did not really achieve maturity in the years 1914-1918, though that is what we used to claim for ourselves in the 1920's. We had maturity thrust upon us by the war. Alas, now in the 1960's when we are older and presumably wiser, we seem to have lost our 19th century sense of impending greatness.

Let me dwell for a moment on this theme of the difference between the 19th and 20th centuries. The 19th century was a great century of hope. It was a period of unprecedented progress in science and technology, in economic expansion, in the improvement of living standards for increasing millions of people. All over the world the masses of common people were rising to a fuller partnership in the life of their communities. The liberal democratic society of the

(CONT)

PROFESSOR FRANK H. UNDERHILL: (CONT)

western world, with its advanced sophisticated technology and forms of social organization, was becoming the standard toward which the whole world seemed to be moving. And for a hundred years after the end of the Napoleonic wars the world enjoyed a continuous period of freedom from great international wars. All this went to produce the 19th century belief in Progress (Progress with a capital "P"). Back of all these achievements was a general faith, which seemed justified by experience, that man is a reasonable, if not completely rational, creature, capable of progressive perfectibility.

The century reached its culmination in the euphoria of that golden age, the dozen years or so just before 1914. He who was not fortunate enough to be born in time to enjoy that golden age can never know what the sweetness of life is.

This century of continuous automatic progress came to a sudden unexpected end on August 4, 1914. We have continued to raise our material standards of comfort and luxury, but we are all uneasily aware today that our society is suffering from some deep-seated malaise-intellectual, moral and spiritual. The old stability of the 19th century has disintegrated. The old sense of established values has disappeared.

At first we thought that the war of 1914 had only been a temporary accidental interruption and we looked forward to a resumption of what an American President called normalcy, that is to a return of the 19th century. But the war destroyed the political framework of the 19th century. The old empires of eastern Europe collapsed - Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey. Russia plunged into her earth-shaking Communist revolution. Germany a few years later plunged into her Nazi counter-revolution, and forced the world into a second great war. The two victorious European powers in the war of 1914, Britain and France, never quite recovered from the terrible blood-letting to which they had been subjected. And the world depression of the 1930's, an experience as unprecedented in world history as the war of 1914, completed the work of destruction that the war had begun. When at last we all came out of World War II, it soon became evident that 1914 had started a permanent revolution the end of which no man can foresee.

(CONT)

PROFESSOR FRANK H. UNDERHILL: (CONT)

In that revolution something has happened to western man. We have become aware of forgotten elements of irrationality in his nature, his still untamed propensity for violence, of his fatal fascination with totalitarian forms of society (including a society geared for total war), of his terrifying capacity for cruelty and bestiality, his vulnerability to a fanaticism that threatens to destroy the 19th century ability to reach agreements by discussion, negotiation and compromise. We have had to abandon our 19th century belief in automatic human progress.

And, in the midst of this world in revolution, we Canadians have remained one of the very few unrevolutionary, anti-revolutionary peoples. Or have we?

At any rate, we Canadians were less prepared for this revolutionary transition from the 19th to the 20th century than were most people in the western world. Through the 19th century Canadians had lived a sheltered existence, protected by British power from the unpleasant facts of world politics. We had achieved self-government without having to fight for it with armed force. We had come to assume that peace is the natural condition of international relations. For from the end of the War of 1812 we had not been touched by war. Canadian forces, it is true, had twice gone off to take part in an overseas war. In 1899 the English Canadians of Ontario and the West went off enthusiastically as Soldiers of the Queen to fight for the British Empire in South Africa. Thirty years earlier, in 1869, French Canada had sent a small force not to fight in defence of the Empire but to help His Holiness Pope Pius IX defend his papal territories against Italian nationalists. It didn't dawn on us till after 1914 that these two little expeditions, taken together, were a rather lurid illustration of the two solitudes, the two completely separated intellectual worlds in which English Canadians and French Canadians were living.

In 1914 Canada and the United States were preparing to celebrate the completion of a century of peace between the two North American peoples. On Christmas Eve, 1914, it would be just one hundred years since the signing of the Treaty of Ghent which officially brought the War of 1812 to a close. In the interval since then the two neighbors had traced their

(CONT)

PROFESSOR FRANK H. UNDERHILL: (CONT)

common frontier across a continent, had settled the fate of territories larger than most of the countries of Europe, and they had remained at peace, even if it was, as described by one famous Canadian journalist, peace with friction. Naturally they were disposed to look back with pride on such an achievement. Might not the New World be destined to set an example to the Old? Into such an atmosphere fell the thunderbolt of August 4, 1914. By the time that Christmas Eve of that year came, 30,000 Canadian soldiers were on the far side of the Atlantic, the largest force of soldiers, as our somewhat bombastic Department of Militia announced, that had ever crossed the Atlantic in human history down to that time. Though we didn't grasp the full implications of the event at the moment, that expedition was the beginning of the 20th century for us. We had turned our backs on the peaceful 19th century. We had plunged into a new kind of experience - total war.

When the war came to an end we could be justly proud of the Canadian military record. The Canadian Corps was built up to be the finest fighting body of its size on the western front. All Canadians who had been overseas in uniform came home filled with exultation over that splendid achievement. We were willing to admit that perhaps the Australians had been just as triumphant fighters as our men - Canadians and Australians have disliked each other ever since because neither in those days could admit the superiority of the other - and there were a few British units who could be compared with our four divisions - the Guards Division, for example, or the 51st Highland Division. But in the supreme Canadian efficiency of that effort, produced by organization, discipline, toughness, team spirit, technical inventiveness, our Canadian national achievement reached a peak.

In particular, we had done better than the Americans. They had come late into the war and had not distinguished themselves. A small country, living next door to a big husky giant, needs occasional experiences of this kind in order to preserve its self-respect and its mental health.

I still remember vividly how much I enjoyed that once famous joke of the Dumbell Concert Party about

(CONT)

PROFESSOR FRANK H. UNDERHILL: (CONT)

the Canadian veteran infantryman, on leave in London from the front some time around the turn of the year in 1917-1918, how he sighted a soldier in the Strand wearing a strange uniform with shoulder patches on it that he could not identify, and how he asked the stranger what unit he came from. "Oh," was the reply, "I'm one of the Americans. We've just come over. We're the Rainbow Division." "Rainbow?" replied the Canadian. "Rainbow? Oh, I see. Came out after the storm was past." When I first heard that joke I thought it was the most delectable witticism that I had ever encountered. There hasn't been much in our Canadian history since the Canadian Corps of World War that has given me the feeling that we are better than the Americans.

It was not only in the military sphere that we distinguished ourselves. Our political leaders, building on the achievements of our fighting men, won a new position for Canada in the politics of the British Empire and of the post-war world.

In the four or five years before the war Canadian party leaders had engaged in bitter controversy as to what Canada's obligations were in the matter of defence. Laurier, the Liberal leader, who had a strong element of North American pacifist isolationism in his make-up, had stood out during all his Prime Ministership against all proposals to make the British Empire a centralized political, military or diplomatic unit; and later history has justified him fully in this matter. But he recognized our colonial duty to support Britain if she got into a life-or-death struggle. And in 1910 he proposed a separate Canadian naval force, to be built and manned by Canadians, and to be available to help Britain in any major war. Bourassa, the French-Canadian nationalist, denounced this as a navy which would be Canadian only in time of peace but would become British in time of war; and he denied any Canadian responsibility beyond the defence of Canadian territory in North America. Borden, the Conservative leader, declared in a memorable phrase that Canada could not be a hermit nation; and when he became Prime Minister in 1911, he adopted the policy of an emergency contribution of three dreadnoughts to the British Navy, adding the declaration that if Canada contributed to a British imperial defence in this way, she must be given a voice in the making of British imperial policy, a

(CONT)

PROFESSOR FRANK H. UNDERHILL: (CONT)

declaration which the British authorities until the middle of the war blandly but carefully failed to hear. When war broke out in 1914 Canada had not yet made up her mind what her place in world power-politics ought to be. But we joined in the war vigorously, without realizing how intense and prolonged an effort it was going to be, and thereby we had maturity thrust upon us.

When Lloyd George became British Prime Minister at the end of 1916 and formed his War Cabinet, he invited the Dominion Prime Ministers to sit in it, and it became the Imperial War Cabinet. Borden now found his demand for a share in the making of British imperial policy fully answered, at least for as long as he could be in London for Imperial War Cabinet meetings. He accompanied the British leaders to Paris to take an active part in the peace-making of 1919. Canadian plenipotentiaries signed the peace treaties; and Canada became an original member of the new international organization, the League of Nations. We had suddenly in a few years achieved the status not merely of an autonomous nation-state in the British Commonwealth cooperating in Commonwealth policy, but of an independent state in world politics. There is no denying that this was a tremendous leap forward.

When we look back now, however, we can see that there are several qualifications to our new maturity of which the men of 1919 were not quite conscious. In the first place, our political leaders were in advance of their people. Canadians felt a general pride in Borden's statesmanship abroad, but they had as yet little realistic understanding of its implications. Debates on external policy during the 1920's and '30's could usually be relied on to empty the House of Commons. After the pressure of war had relaxed, there were few votes to be won by an active foreign policy. And Mackenzie King, during his Prime Ministership, interpreted Canadian feeling accurately enough by his long continued isolationist policy of refusing commitments both in British imperial affairs and in League of Nations affairs.

The hard fact is that we welcomed membership in the League chiefly for its value as a status symbol, not as an advance in policy which imposed active obligations on us. Borden, when the covenant of the

(CONT)

PROFESSOR FRANK H. UNDERHILL: (CONT)

League was being drawn up, was as opposed to the guarantee in Article Ten of "the territorial integrity and existing political independence" of all its members as was the American Senate when the text of the Covenant was published. The Americans, being a more mature people than we were, quite honestly stayed out of the League because they were not prepared to guarantee the 1919 territorial settlement of Europe. But League membership gave us such a sense of our own international importance that we blithely undertook the obligations of the Covenant and then tried to interpret our way out of them. In effect, we were as isolationist, though inside the League, during the 1920's and '30's as the Americans were outside the League.

But by 1939 we had come to realize, or our leaders had, that we could not afford to see Britain and France eliminated as great powers in western Europe, whatever we might think of their particular policies. So we went into World War II. Our isolationism between the two wars was based on the theory that the League of Nations had eliminated the danger of a major war for the future. As a Canadian statesman informed the League Assembly in the 1920's, Canada lived in a fire-proof house and therefore didn't need to take out any further insurance against the danger of a big international fire. When in the years 1933-1934, with the rise of Hitler, the world passed from the post-war into the pre-war era, we had to go through a painful revision of this complacent opinion. As I look back now, I don't feel very proud, personally, that in those difficult days of the late 1930's I remained an obstinate isolationist.

We did at last reach a belated maturity after our experience in World War II. In the United Nations since then we have played a part which has won us some reputation. As members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which was launched partly on Canadian initiative, we are now doing something of which no Canadian could have dreamed before the 1950's; we are maintaining an armed force in western Europe in time of peace. And we are doing this because we recognize that our security depends upon the security of western Europe. But we have not yet quite adjusted ourselves to one fundamental change which World War I

(CONT)

PROFESSOR FRANK H. UNDERHILL: (CONT)

brought about: that is the decline of Britain as a world power. It was British power which had guaranteed our security before 1914. We now live in a world in which we depend, in addition to our own efforts, upon American power. We will not be a fully mature people until we have come to accept this condition calmly as one of the facts of life. Up to the present it has turned too many Canadians into helpless neurotics.

Still, our record on the international scene since those days when the outbreak of war in 1914 compelled us to make new decisions in our life has been, on the whole, a creditable one. We have genuinely earned the good name which we now enjoy throughout the world.

But it is difficult to feel so happy about our domestic history in the last fifty years.

For World War I produced a crisis in the relations of English and French-Canadians within Canada from which we have never recovered. In 1917 the pressure of war casualties convinced the great majority of English-Canadians that we must adopt conscription in order to meet our man-power commitments on the western front. They were so inflamed at the relative failure of French-Canadians to enlist voluntarily that, in the end, they imposed their will and proceeded to coerce the recalcitrant French-Canadian group of fellow citizens. This was the worst and most fatal breakdown in English-French cooperation from which we have ever suffered; and we are still paying the price for it in Canada. In fact, we do not yet know in 1964 how high the price is going to be.

Our political leaders forgot in 1917 that the first function of Canadian statesmanship is to keep English and French going along together. It seems to me that Sir Robert Borden, whose record was so fine in the conduct of international relations during these years, has never received sufficient condemnation for what he allowed to happen inside Canada in 1917. After all, he was the responsible Prime Minister. It was primarily his duty to prevent the fatal cleavage whereby our politics became dominated by the stark confrontation of an English-Canadian majority facing a French-Canadian minority, with neither side prepared to compromise.

(CONT)

PROFESSOR FRANK H. UNDERHILL: (CONT)

This was a tragedy for both of the two great French-Canadians Laurier and Bourassa. Laurier had devoted his whole career to bringing about harmony between the two communal groups; and now he went down to final defeat standing with his own group against conscription. In earlier days, denouncing Laurier's policy of racial conciliation, Bourassa had declared, with characteristic wit, that Laurier spoke French with an English accent. Alas, we have usually lacked English-Canadian leaders, when we have needed them most, who speak English with a French accent.

Bourassa had devoted himself to winning for his French-Canadians a position of full equality in the pan-Canadian community. He was defeated for the moment in this effort, but in the long run his campaign changed the balance of power within Canada, for he taught his fellow French-Canadians to refuse to remain second-class citizens. He was defeated partly because he became so passionate in denouncing the English-Canadian section of the community. The real enemy, he declared, was not German militarism but Anglo-Saxon materialism. This at a time when Canadian soldiers were dying in France and Flanders. Nevertheless, I fancy that, as time goes on, both Laurier and Bourassa will loom high above their English-speaking contemporaries in our Canadian history. They were two men capable of tragedy. Our English-Canadian statesmen have never quite risen to that moral and spiritual height.

The most fatal result of this painful division in 1917 was that Bourassa's successors in the leadership of French-Canadian nationalism turned from his wider pan-Canadian outlook to concentrate their thoughts and efforts upon an inward-looking, tribal, particularist French-Canadian nationalism. This is what plagues our politics today. We have not lived long enough yet to shake ourselves free and to recover from the trauma of 1917.

It is obvious also that, if we cannot present to the outer world the spectacle of two racial groups who have learned to live together amicably in one community, we shall have nothing much of value to say to this 20th century world in which groups of different color, race, religion, language, economic levels and ideology wage hot or cold war with one another.

(CONT.)

PROFESSOR FRANK H. UNDERHILL: (CONT)

World War I led to two other developments in our domestic affairs which were of much happier consequence than this desperate English-French affair. One was the reform of our Federal Civil Service which turned it into what it is today, a body of the highest technical and professional skill and integrity. The successful Government of post-war Canada would have been impossible without this development. The other was the setting up in 1916 of the National Research Council. By this step our Government undertook a new national responsibility, the fostering of scientific research for the purpose of making us a more competent people in the modern world, and also a more independent people as we grew out of the dependent status of a parasite upon the scientific and industrial research done in more mature countries.

The National Research Council was started during the war because of the discovery of how far the Allies were behind Germany in scientific research. But surely our war experience demonstrated still more emphatically the weakness of our social fabric, our need for more understanding and skill in the social art of living together. For war produced not merely the English-French bitterness, but also a new sinister class bitterness. By 1918 farmers, industrial workers and consumers were all complaining loudly about exploitation. Our society was coming too much under the domination of the "profiteers", the hard-faced men who looked as if they had done well out of the war. If the war proved the need for more research workers in the natural sciences, it proved still more emphatically the need for more sociologists, economists, political scientists, historian psychologists and philosophers to study our social problems, the need for more poets, novelists, dramatists, artists, to reveal us to ourselves. Surely if one kind of research deserved support from the national government, so did all this social study and writing which was crying out to be done. But it was not until the 1950's, after World War II, that the Massey Commission induced our government to recognize at last its responsibilities in the fostering of culture in the fields of the humanities and social sciences.

World War I had another effect on our life at which have already hinted. It led to the disintegration of the social and political consensus which had enabled us to conduct our politics since 1867 within the limits of the classical two-party system. There is nothing sacred about the two-party system; but if democratic politics is to

(CONT)

PROFESSOR FRANK H. UNDERHILL: (CONT)

work successfully, it must be based upon a degree of consensus, everyone understanding instinctively that the things which unite us are more fundamental than the things which divide us. A system of two composite, moderate parties is a great unifying force in a community of such diverse elements as ours. But we have not had a two-party system since the end of World War I. And today neither of the old major parties seems able to lead us back to the paradise lost of the pre-1914 two-party system, and none of the new minor parties seems able to lead us forward to the paradise regained of some effective new system. We are suffering from a paralysis of politics which has dangerous potentialities. World War I put much more strain upon our social cohesiveness than we realized on Armistice Day, 1918.

So at the end of my analysis I reach the usual historian's conclusion: On the one hand. . . On the other hand. As we met the challenge of World War I we showed ourselves capable of greater heroism, endurance and idealism than one would have thought possible if he looked only at the easy prosperity of the pre-1914 wheat boom in Canada; but also we showed ourselves liable to deeper social cleavages and more irrational forms of fanaticism than it is pleasant to contemplate.

This leads me to my last point. I have been emphasizing what happened to us Canadians as citizens in one of the rising nation-states of the 20th century world. But surely we should have learned from World War I, and from everything that has followed it in history, that a world of separate, independent, sovereign nation-states is too dangerous to be any longer tolerable. Somehow or other we and our contemporaries in this 20th century have to show that we have the creative imagination necessary to make us capable of a wider loyalty than that to the nation. Somehow or other we have to create a world in which free citizens will find that their most significant loyalties are leading them to some more comprehensive community than that of the national state (or bi-national state). The most distressing thing about present-day Canada is that most of us, English-Canadians as well as French-Canadians, westerners as well as easterners, young as well as old, are looking inward rather than outward, obsessed with a narrow Sinn Fein vision of ourselves alone.

ANNOUNCER: Thank you Professor Underhill.

In bringing this seventeen-week series to a close we must recognize the contributions of many people whose efforts and ideas brought the programmes into being.

The planning and research were directed by A. E. Powley.

The shaping of the series, the cataloguing of the material, the detailed research and the final tape-editing was done by Frank Lalor.

Consulting Historian, Colonel G.W.L. Nicholson, C.D., author of the Official History of the Canadian Army in the First World War.

The interviewers, from time to time and in many places, were,

A.E. Powley
Stephen Dale
Peter Stursburg
Len Chapple
Ray deBoer
Robert Christie
Ron. Hambleton
Doug. Brophy
Val Cleary
Bill Herbert, and
Frank Lalor.

Research assistant, Kay Scantlebury.

Project clerk, Frances Nelson.

Technical Editor, Russell McWhinnie.

Recording Engineer, Ross Totten.

The dramatic reconstructions for programmes One and Seventeen were created by Joseph Schull.

Sound effects: John Sliz and Fred. Tudor.

Studio operations: John Skillen.

Recording Librarian and Production Assistant,
Grace Athersich.

"FLANDERS' FIELDS" was narrated, directed and produced by J. Frank Willis.

(CONT)

" FLANDERS' FIELDS " - #17 - "THE AFTERMATH"

ANNOUNCER:(CONT)

Lastly, and especially, do we acknowledge with profound gratitude the generous cooperation of more than six hundred veterans of the Canadian Corps, some no longer here, whose extraordinary powers of recall and enthusiasm for the project made this unique eight-hundred-and-thirty-hour compilation of oral history a fact.

This is Lamont Tilden speaking.
